



PARADISE OF DEMONIC GODS

BOOK 01

Bear Wolfdog

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Paradise of Demonic Gods

(魔神乐园)

by

Bear Wolfdog

(熊狼狗)

Synopsis

“Obtaining the topmost degree of talent in sword arts in the world requires giving up 72 years of lifespan, which leaves you with only five more years of your life. At the same time, you will never be able to feel love, kinship, and friendship, and you’ll end up leading a lonely life until your death, unable to procreate, or to have any descendants.

“From now onwards, everything related to happiness in the human world shall no longer be of your concern. Are you willing to accept this?”

“Hahahaha, I’m already alone bereft of all support, my hopes dashed to pieces, shouldering only absolutely irreconcilable grudge and hatred, why would I disagree? Why would I not want it? I couldn’t ask for anything better!!”

His sword sweeps across the Divine Continent for seven days and nights, moving 90,000 miles through the starry skies, unhindered.

He slays saints and buddhas in Heaven, slaughters demons and devils in Hell, sweeping away all the grievances in his heart!

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Chapter 1 Demonic City

In the year 2035 came the shocking news of a great explosion occurring in the airspace above one of the biggest cities in Xin Country – Roiling Ocean City. Not only did the landmarks and geographical areas in its surroundings abruptly undergo a huge transformation, but an otherworldly dimensional-gap also appeared in the skies. This caused a part of the current world to partially merge with the Other World.

Afterward, the city underwent a series of transformations which led other people in the world to name it Demonic City, one which had caught the attention of countries worldwide.

From the time of the great explosion until now, it had already been sixteen years. And at this very moment, Fang Xingjian, sixteen years of age, was standing atop a bluestone bridge, practicing his Basic Sword Technique.

He had learned this set of Basic Sword Technique from a common martial school. Although it was simple, it contained the full set of basic sword moves which were essential knowledge for every practitioner in Demonic City.

An hour later, under the glare of the winter sun, drops of perspiration were shining on Fang Xingjian’s body. The vigorous set of movements had made his muscles heat up repeatedly, tempering them.

After finishing his set, Fang Xingjian gradually pulled his sword back, meanwhile focusing his attention on the Stats Window in his brain.

Name
Fang Xingjian
Age
16

Occupation

Warrior's Squire

Level

9

Strength

9

Agility

9

Reaction

6

Endurance

6

Flexibility

6

Basic Sword Technique

Level 3 (15325/32500)

Single-handed Sword Grab

Level 2 (23455/42200)

Cross-slash

Level 2 (11325/23900)

Those who had experienced the transformation were akin to people in an MMORPG world; they could level up and even add points to their stats. Within the circumference of the world in Demonic City, everything had undergone a core transformation, while the original laws and physics of the world no longer applied here. Ever since Demonic City and the Other World had merged together, all material objects within the boundaries of the city

manifested as if they had entered the Other World. When material objects entered Demonic City, they would undergo a change where their information would be presented as data and statistics. Naturally, this also applied to humans.

For example, earlier, when Fang Xingjian had been practicing the basic sword skills, he had gained experience in both the Basic Sword Technique and the Single-handed Sword Grab. As long as he kept practicing, and as long as he met the requirements, his level of proficiency in these two techniques would naturally rise.

Those with good talent would gain a lot of experience points after each practice session, and would also require little experience in order to advance to the next level. Not only that, if one's talent was great enough, the level of one's techniques could break into level 10, 12, 13, and even level 15!

However, Fang Xingjian knew what his own talent amounted to. Based on the large amount of experience points he needed in order to advance to the next level, he knew that his talent was only average. At most, he would only be able to train the three techniques he was practicing up to level 10.

Cautiously, he put the long training sword away. Each and every one of his training weapons had been bought with the savings he had managed to put together cent by cent. Thus, he cared for them a great deal.

Next, Fang Xingjian took up the hundred-jin-heavy steel greatsword lying by his side. The greatsword was a blunt, monolithic practice tool, which sacrificed all other factors in favor of weight.

With Fang Xingjian's physical strength, both his hands trembled as he lifted the greatsword. His agility also slowed extremely when he tried to execute sword techniques with the weapon, facing extreme difficulty in using it.

After practicing only half a set of the Basic Sword Technique, he

could not bear it anymore. The sword fell to the ground with a clatter, spidery cracks appearing on the ground from the impact. Fang Xingjian drew in huge breath after huge breath, both his arms aching with pain and soreness, unable to lift the greatsword again.

“This won’t do, I’m still so far away from the realm of ‘lifting a heavy object as though it were light’.”

The state where one had the ability to wield a hundred-jin-heavy sword whilst dancing about as though wielding a common sword was called ‘lifting a heavy object as though it were light’. Legend said that this was a standard originating from the Other World. It would only be achievable when one’s strength, agility, endurance, and flexibility stats each reached 10 points or more.

Strength, agility, reaction, endurance, and flexibility were known as the ‘five major attributes’.

The strength attribute represented the ability to fight against resistance, in motion.

The agility attribute represented the muscles’ actions: the contractions of one’s muscles, as well as their explosive strength.

The reaction attribute represented the level of efficiency with which the brain processed information input. The combination of the agility and reaction attributes represented the speed of each movement one could make in battle.

The endurance attribute represented the muscles’ and the heart blood-vessels’ endurance. The higher the stats, the more times one could execute one’s techniques.

The flexibility attribute represented the degree of ease with which one could perform actions. The higher the stats were for the flexibility attribute, the steadier one’s strength and speed, and the closer one would be to the maximum value of damage range. The attack’s explosiveness would also be stronger, and the chance of

injury reduced.

However, the five major attributes' effects did not grow in direct proportion to the number of stat points. 10 stat points in the strength attribute would give you more than a few times' increase in strength, compared to having only 5 stat points. It did not simply mean a two-fold increase in strength.

Reaching the state of 'lifting something heavy as though it were light' also meant that strength, agility, endurance, and flexibility had at least 10 stat points each, allowing one to move as fast as a galloping horse, and to have strength akin to a water buffalo. Each punch or kick would be enough to kill an ordinary person.

Fang Xingjian was currently wielding the greatsword not because he wanted to test the depths of his strength, but to temper and train his various attributes.

After putting the greatsword away, Fang Xingjian ended his morning practice and started washing his body before changing into a blue shirt and black suit.

The shirt's color had already faded from repeated washing, and the western suit had shrunk so much that it no longer fit him. Despite this, he was still wearing them. It was obvious how bad Fang Xingjian's financial situation was.

Fang Xingjian walked out of the small courtyard, his eyes falling on layers and layers of fascinating and enchanting Chinese-styled courtyards.

On his way, he saw many muscular guys clad in western suits, patrolling. There were also several ladies clad in white who were watering the flowers, sweeping the floors, and doing miscellaneous chores. As they saw Fang Xingjian approaching, all of them bowed and called out, "Young Master Fang."

They appeared to be part of a great clan of ancient tradition, emanating the attitude of a wealthy family.

In fact, as one of the Five Great Clans in the current Demonic City, the Fang Clan was comparable to a feudal clan from ancient times.

The Fang Clan, history told, was a great feudal clan which had been in existence for more than two hundred years. In the previous era, during their most glorious times, they had owned over ten thousand mu^[1] of fields, over a hundred businesses, and countless slaves, servants, and beautiful concubines.

However, about one hundred years ago, their previous accumulated wealth had all been exhausted. With the dawn of the new era, they experienced a huge transformation. The Fang Clan was terrified that Xin Country would want to deal with the great clans of the old era, and thus they turned to hiding overseas, re-establishing their roots there.

It was not until twenty years ago when the country's actions had become open and forthright and the international situation had turned volatile that the Fang Clan had moved their business back within Xin Country.

Four years after their return to the country, about sixteen years ago, the descent of the Other World had occurred. Outside Demonic City, everything had stayed the same, but those within it had become inhabitants of the transformed world. Countless people made use of this chance to rise, venturing into the Other World. After they came back, because of their huge increase in power, they accomplished many heaven-shocking and earth-shattering deeds.

Out of the people who came back, the five strongest ones' families became known as the Five Great Clans, and Fang Clan was one of the five.

It was a pity that the Fang Clan's lord had died in a battle in the Other World, seven years ago. Gradually, the Fang Clan had begun to decline, and eventually, it had become the weakest member of

the Five Great Clans.

Fang Xingjian walked through the long corridor and stepped into the dining hall. On the seat of honor there was a middle-aged woman, her beauty and grace evident despite her years. The woman's rich black hair was meticulously tied up, and she was wearing red-colored western attire with an upright collar, along with brightly shining high heels. Overall, she appeared to be very strict.

The corners of her eyes slightly curled upwards, and her sword-shaped eyebrows also angled upwards as she stayed silent, fierceness radiating from her features. With a single look, one could tell that this person was difficult to communicate with.

Only through extremely thorough scrutiny would one be able to notice the deep traces of fatigue marked by the furrows on her forehead.

The Old Granny had been focusing her attention on a document in her hand, and only when Fang Xingjian had entered the dining hall did she raise her head to look at her grandson[2], indifferently uttering, "Sit."

This person was currently in charge of the Fang Clan. She was Fang Xingjian's maternal grandmother, the forty-nine-year-old matriarch of the Fang Clan, Li Shuanghua.

Fang Xingjian cautiously sat upright towards the front of his chair, his back straight, his buttocks only taking up one-third of the seat.

Beside him was a couple over the age of thirty. They were none other than his mother's brother and sister-in-law, Fang Xingjian's second uncle and second aunt.

Fang Xingjian smiled as he nodded to his second uncle. His second uncle looked as though he wanted to say something, but was stopped by his wife, and could only cast a helpless glance at

Fang Xingjian. In recent years the clan of his second uncle's wife had been rising in prestige and had gained a great increase in strength. This had allowed her words to hold more weight at home. In the past, his second uncle had always managed his wife strictly, but now, it was the opposite, as he followed obediently and acted in accordance to everything his wife said.

Fang Xingjian had never been highly regarded in the family. Usually, only his second uncle would talk to him, asking him about his life. But now that his second uncle was being controlled so strictly by his wife, the latter had stopped talking to Fang Xingjian.

Ever since they had married, there had been no news of any pregnancy, which was also the reason why the Old Granny disliked his second uncle's wife. If it were not for the fact that his wife's family had risen in prestige during the past few years, the Old Granny would have already forced his second uncle to divorce long ago.

With the exception of the Old Granny, the three of them sat upright, and none of them dared to speak. Based on the current tyrannical strength of the Old Granny, in addition to her presence as someone in charge of a great feudal clan, no one dared to go against her words. Basically, in this place, her words were the law.

After fifteen minutes, the Old Granny frowned, making the three of them nervous as they watched her put the document away. Before glancing up, she instructed a female servant, "Xing, go and see why Third Master is taking so long. Get him here in five minutes."

[1] classifier for fields/unit of area equal to one fifteenth of a hectare

[2] The Fang Clan is Fang Xingjian's mother side of the family. For unknown reasons, Fang Xingjiang has taken on his mother's surname instead of his father's. Generally, daughters and their children are valued less, since a daughter is generally 'married out'

of her own family into her husband's.

Chapter 2 Assignments

No sooner had the Old Granny given the command, than a loud commotion rang out as Fang Xingjian's third uncle, Fang Yueming, walked in with a smile. "Mother, no need to call for me. Am I not already here now? Sigh, I was so busy last night... What good food is there to eat?"

Second aunt laughed coldly to herself as she thought, 'What could he possibly be busy with? He probably stayed at the casino the whole night and didn't come home until morning.'

The Old Granny picked up her chopsticks and whacked third uncle's hand, which had been reaching out towards the dining table. "How many times have I told you? We can only start eating when everyone has arrived. You have no manners at all!"

"Mother, it's because I'm hungry..." Third uncle felt grieved.

"You are really..." Looking at her youngest son, whom she pampered the most, the Old Granny's heart softened. But she still replied sternly, "Bear with it, we will be starting the meal soon."

While they were talking, third aunt had already carried a dignified and strong-looking four-year-old child into the room. When the Old Granny saw this grandchild of hers, the frozen expression on her face immediately melted, and she broke into a rare warm smile. In this family, the Old Granny was fondest of third uncle's family.

Third aunt also smiled. Then, looking at third uncle, who seemed very sleepy with his pair of panda eyes, she gave him a harsh kick. Fang Xingjian knew that his third aunt was also a tough character. Her family held military power while she herself, though shrewd and unkind, was especially good in getting into other people's good books. Not only third uncle, even the Old Granny liked her a lot. Furthermore, after giving birth to a son four years ago, the Old Granny now liked them even more.

Seeing this, second aunt became increasingly unhappy, throwing a harsh glance at second uncle, who only laughed.

The Old Granny calmly said, "Let's start the meal."

Maids entered like flowing water right away, setting down the cutlery, lifting the lids of various pots, and pouring wine and juice.

With a word from the Old Granny, everyone at the dining table immediately started looking alive. Fang Xingjian carefully ate the food in front of him, while second uncle occasionally got food for his wife.

Third uncle could not wait any longer, grabbing a chicken drumstick and digging in under third aunt's annoyed glare.

Everyone ate in an orderly and quiet manner, no one daring to speak a word. It was the Old Granny's rule that one did not speak when having a meal, and that one did not chatter before going to bed.

Unlike Fang Xingjian, who was only level 9, Old Granny had long reached the divine level, level 30. She no longer had high requirements for the food she partook in, and only took a few symbolic bites before stopping. Looking at her little grandson[1], who had oil all over his mouth because of the food, she smiled, picked up a napkin, and wiped off the oil stains from his mouth. She looked very amiable then, entirely different from her previous cold-as-ice look.

"Eat slowly. One must look proper when having a meal."

The four-year-old Fang Xingchen had been instilled with the various rules and regulations of great clans from an early age, unlike a commoner family's child. He looked like a small adult, sitting up straight, picking his own food, each movement prim and proper.

If one could say that the Old Granny doted on third uncle and his family the most, disliked second aunt, and detested second uncle

for his uselessness, then towards her grandchild Fang Xingjian, for reasons unknown to him, she felt hatred.

Fang Xingjian was conscious of this, which was also why he stayed quietly in his corner, eating only from the dishes placed in front of him, and not standing up to reach for the dishes placed further away from him.

About twenty minutes later, everyone had almost eaten their fill. The maids cleared away the dishes and brought in a big pot of soup. The moment they saw this soup, regardless of whether it was second uncle and aunt, or third uncle and aunt, their expressions showed excited expectation.

The soup stock was made from an extremely vicious animal by the name of Nine-Headed Abyss Bird, its level having been over 25. The military had sent their forces to the Other World to hunt it and bring it back to Demonic City. Multiple alchemists had then worked together to create this Nine Blood Spirit-Changing Soup, with the heart of the Nine-Headed Abyss Bird as the main ingredient, complemented by eighty-one different precious herbs.

The soup not only filled one's stomach, it also had the effects of refining muscles and bones, replenishing vital energy and blood, cleansing impurities, and improving one's constitution, therefore significantly hastening one's training progress.

Even with the financial powers of the Fang Clan, each person could only afford to drink a very small bowl at lunch every day.

After the maids served the soup, everyone drank it up in haste.

"Xingchen, granny will give her share to you." The Old Granny seemed a lot happier watching her grandchild drink the soup in big gulps rather than drinking it herself.

The four-year-old Fang Xingchen was very polite, and said, "One bowl is enough for me. Granny is always busy handling important tasks and is the pillar of our Fang Clan. It would be better for

Granny to take this bowl of Nine Blood Spirit-Changing Soup instead.”

The Old Granny smiled and said, “It’s alright. It has no effect on me, regardless of whether or not I drink it. Right now your body is still developing, you can have it.”

“Thank you for the gift, Granny.” Fang Xingchen raised his small hands and received the bowl of soup respectfully.

On the other hand, Fang Xingjian was, obviously, the last person to be served with the soup. Peering at the mysterious soup in his bowl, which looked as if it had the soul of a tiger, his throat trembled uncontrollably.

This bowl of soup would be able to provide his Qi, blood, veins and muscles with a great number of nutritious supplements. It was also the benefit of having been born in a big clan.

He quickly finished the whole bowl of Nine Blood Spirit-Changing Soup, feeling its warmth spread throughout his body as if a pleasant current was traveling through it and refining it. Fang Xingjian took a whiff of the soup, wishing that he could have more than one bowl as he glanced jealously at Fang Xingchen.

However, he knew that it was hopeless for him to be envious of the love that the Old Granny had for Fang Xingchen.

Once all the food had been finished, the servants cleared the cutlery and started to serve tea and snacks. Everyone knew that it was time for the Old Granny to discuss family issues with them, or to check on the progress of their assignments.

After taking a sip of tea, the Old Granny spoke out. “Have there been any problems with the daily necessities we have at home, recently?”

Second aunt immediately stood up. She had always been the one to supervise the daily necessities and accounting of the whole family. She said, “There’s enough. Mother, do you want to take a

look at the accounting records?”

“Mmm, it’s good enough if they’re sufficient. I won’t look at the records.” The Old Granny considered second aunt’s expression and asked “What other issues do you have?”

Second aunt proudly said, “Mother, Yuehe (second uncle) has been training hard recently, and has finally reached level 19. He is already preparing for the second job transition.”

Based on the current research conducted by humans, starting from level 1, a person’s level could rise until one reached level 30. However, when on the verge of leveling up from level 9 to level 10, from level 19 to level 20, and from level 29 to level 30, there was an obstacle requiring one to go through a job transition before he or she could continue leveling up.

The Other World had a set of natural methods to successfully get through job transitions, passed down from long ago. While people on Earth had not inherited these methods, through the research of scientists from all over the world and with help from some of the forces in the Other World, a way to go through job transitions by extracting the essence of ferocious beasts and using it to draw magic prints on the human body had been invented.

Starting from the first job transition, up to the second job transition, and all the way to the third job transition, when one leveled up from level 29 to level 30, people could gain extraordinary strength and could also gain progress within the job type they chose with each job transition.

For example, before they went through the first job transition, at level 9 or lower, most people would only be able to attain a 1 point increase in an attribute of their own selection.

After the first job transition, from level 9 and all the way up to level 19, even the trashiest job would give a 1 point increase in strength, a 1 point increase in agility, as well as a 1 point increase in an area of one’s own choice.

The more powerful the job one transitioned to, the more extraordinary the gained strength would be, and the higher the points required for each increase in job progression level. It was already hard enough for one to win over an opponent who was a level higher, and it was essentially impossible to win over one who was two levels higher, but one would be crushed by an opponent three levels higher than oneself.

Of course, there were exceptions, namely people who had exceptional talent. Even if they were no match for their opponents in terms of level, they would still be able to challenge opponents of higher levels by learning stronger techniques, and by gaining more exceptional specialties.

Attributes, techniques, specialties. These were the three major factors which determined one's combat powers.

Hearing second aunt's words, and seeing the look of complacency on her face, third aunt sneered to herself and interrupted, "Oh, second brother will be going through the second job transition so soon? It couldn't be that all of his experience was gained from killing monsters, could it?"

Leveling up required experience, and there were three ways to gain experience. Firstly, to kill ferocious monsters or humans; secondly, to study and learn; and lastly, to train one's skills or physique.

To other people, killing monsters was an extremely difficult task. However, a big clan such as the Fang Clan had the ability to purchase dying ferocious animals in bulk, just in order to kill them. Thus they would be able to level up quickly.

This way of leveling up, though, would tend to make one inferior to other people of the same level. If one did not rely on learning, training and upgrading their skills, one would not have as many attributes, techniques, and specialties as others.

It was also something which Fang Clan's Old Granny detested.

On hearing third aunt's words, second aunt frowned, and anger rose within her. But, seeing the Old Granny frowning, she immediately explained, "That's not true! Yuehe (second uncle) has been putting a lot of effort in his training! I got my eldest brother to especially give him some pointers in the path of the sword, and he has shown great improvement, and has now reached level 19."

The Old Granny nodded when she heard this. "I have also heard much of Zhan Xiandao's (second aunt's elder brother) renowned name. Son, it's a rare opportunity. You'll have to learn from him."

"I understand."

Seeing how submissive he was, the Old Granny said, satisfied, "You are my son, and Fang Clan's Second Master. Since you will be going through the second job transition soon, the clan will definitely have to help you. What are your plans?"

Very carefully, second uncle said, "I plan to choose between Blood Abyss Sovereign and Heavenly Disaster Medium."

"Mmm, they both sound good. But both of them would require quite the expenditure," said the Old Granny. "Later on I'll get someone to transfer you fifty million. You can choose the magic print required for the job transition yourself."

Hearing this, both second aunt and uncle were surprised and quickly gave their thanks. Third uncle did not seem to mind, but third aunt's countenance looked gloomy and unhappy.

Second aunt looked at third aunt proudly, then suddenly asked, "Oh, right. Sister, third brother has been leaving early and returning home late daily. He must have been training very hard as well. And with the two masters hired by mother herself, he must be showing progress and is sure to reach the second job transition soon, right?"

Third aunt obviously knew her husband well. Even if her mother-in-law invited instructors from the military, this fellow

would still be worthless. Forget about training, she had to be thankful if he did not visit the casino every night!

He was merely at level 14, despite turning thirty soon.

Hearing the other party's words, third aunt could only smile bitterly and say, "Not yet. How could it be so soon? Yueming (third uncle) plans to focus on strengthening his techniques first..."

Following that, the Old Granny brought up some other issues, respectively testing second and third uncles' progress, and giving them feedback. Second aunt felt superior, looking boastful, while third aunt was overcome with exasperation and rage, hating her husband for his uselessness.

[1] Referring to Fang Xingchen

Chapter 3 Talent

At the very end, the Old Granny clapped her hands. Seeing that she was the focus of everyone's looks, her face broke into a proud smile.

Those who knew the Old Granny well would be able to tell that she probably had an announcement to make, and one which pleased her at that.

The Old Granny tried to hold in her smile as she said, "Xingchen's test results are out."

The jobs that humans could choose were divided into two big categories. One of them was the most common Warrior job, which was available to everyone.

The other one, Mage, was only for those with psychokinesis abilities. Generally, only one in ten thousand would meet the requirements for becoming a Mage.

If one was to state the difference between the Mage and the Warrior, it would be as vast as the difference between a Warrior who had already undergone the second job transition and one who had undergone the first job transition; or a Warrior who had gone through the third job transition and one who had only gone through the second job transition. The Mage was akin to a killing machine, born to be above all living creatures.

Fang Xingjian, naturally, had gone through the same test long ago, when he had been young. It was too bad that he did not have the necessary talent to become a Mage.

Hearing that Fang Xingchen's test results were out, and looking at the Old Granny's expression, everyone was feeling circumspect.

The Mage proficiency examination ran a detailed test on the subject's mental status, physical status, aptitude in psychokinesis and many other factors. The results of the test would obviously

decide whether the subject had the potential to become a Mage or not.

Following everyone's gaze, the Old Granny smiled as she looked at Fang Xingchen and said, "Seems that there's going to be a Mage in our Fang Clan. The results of the test state that Xingchen has the aptitude to become a Red Robed Mage."

"How... How is that possible?" Seeing this, second aunt's face turned extremely pale. She knew that there was no way she would have the same standing as third aunt anymore.

Third aunt cried out, "Hahahaha, Red Robed! The talent to become a Red Robed Mage! My son is a Red Robed Mage!"

"Mage?" After being stunned for a while, third uncle said in a daze, "My son has the talent to become a Mage? My son is going to be a Mage! I am going to be the father of a Mage! Hahahahaha!"

The Old Granny looked at the dazed Fang Xingchen, who did not know what to do, then she smiled and said, "Xingchen, Granny has already registered you with the Mage Association. You'll have to work hard to pick up Mage skills in the future."

The whole scene was a mess, with gazes ranging from envy and jealousy to excitement, all directed towards Fang Xingchen. All of it made him the absolute star of the moment.

A look of yearning hung on Fang Xingjian's face, but it eventually faded away, as he headed out of the hall.

"Young Master has the talent to become a Mage!"

"Did you hear? The tests showed that Young Master has the aptitude to become a Mage!"

"Is that the truth? Seems like our Fang Clan will finally have the chance to shine again, amongst the Five Great Clans."

Walking along the long corridor, Fang Xingjian kept hearing the servants' chattering. In but a moment, the news of Fang Xingchen

having the talent to be a Mage had spread throughout the whole mansion.

There were also those who smirked when seeing Fang Xingjian.

The Old Granny had always doted on Fang Xingchen. Now that his aptitude to become a Mage had been revealed, Fang Xingjian, to whom the Old Granny had not taken a liking, would now lead a life even worse than usual.

Fang Xingjian was feeling a very complicated swirl of contrary emotions. Although he felt happy that his younger brother had the talent to become a Mage, and happy for the prosperity that the Fang Clan would gain with this, he also felt a mixture of bitterness, jealousy, and envy.

‘Why... Why was I not the one with the talent?’

‘If I were the talented one, then grandmother would like me too, right?’

Fang Xingjian, in a stupor, unknowingly walked into a bamboo forest courtyard. He could no longer see any servants in the vicinity as if he had entered another world altogether.

Soon after, he heard a lament.

“Ten~~years, deadand~~living~~dim~~and~~draw~~apart~~”[1]

Hearing the lament, Fang Xingjian felt a surging feeling of loneliness and chilliness in his heart, as if all of his blood was going to freeze, and his life would forever turn dim and gloomy.

However, he was someone who had attained full experience for level 9 after all, and he was going to undertake the first job transition any time now. Given his developed physical attribute, he reacted right away and turned his head towards the direction of the strange lament. He saw a man in black standing ten meters away from him.

The man in black seemed very blurry, and the spot where he was

standing seemed to be shrouded in a layer of black mist as if he was an envoy from hell.

“Who are you? How dare you break into the Fang Residence?”

Fang Xingjian immediately realized that the other party was not a character who a low-level Warrior not even past his first job transition could deal with. This was why he had hollered, in a bid to alert the other people in the mansion.

Who would have thought that right after he said that, the man in black would turn and point towards him? In the next moment, purple flames started leaping towards Fang Xingjian. Then he only felt the flaring purple flames engulfing him, as he cried out in agony.

“Argh!!”

“Young Master, Young Master?”

Fang Xingjian opened his eyes and noticed a servant standing in front of him and calling him.

The bamboo forest was still in front of his eyes, but there was no man in black in the courtyard. It was as if everything that happened had been an illusion.

He looked at the servant in front of him and asked, “Did you see that man in black? Did you see purple flames?”

“What man in black and purple flames? Young Master, you’ve only been standing here all along.” The servant was stunned for a moment as he looked at him in astonishment, then said, “Old Ancestress has asked me to summon you to the ancestral hall.”

‘Illusion?’ Fang Xingjian shook his head, still unable to figure out what had just happened. He could only put it aside for now.

He replied, “Grandmother asked me to go to the ancestral hall? Got it, I’ll go right now.”

Then, he headed for the ancestral hall, unaware of a small purple

tattoo which had appeared at the bottom of the back of his neck.

Fang Xingjian lowered his head and entered the ancestral hall respectfully. The Old Granny was already standing in the middle of the ancestral hall, her gaze at the memorial tablets.

When the rich gained fame, they would tend to come up with things like pedigree and ancestral halls. Obviously, the Fang Clan was no different.

For the past few generations, all deceased members of the Fang Clan were immortalized in ancestral halls. The ashes of the clan's ancestors were in the adjacent crematorial hall, where Fang Xingjian's mother's remains were also stored.

A complicated expression on her face, the Old Granny Li Shuanghua gazed at the tablet inscribed with the name Fang Yueru (Fang Xingjian's mother).

Hearing Fang Xingjian's footsteps, she did not turn around, but said, "You will be going through the first job transition soon?"

"Yes, I have reached level 9 for over a month now."

The Old Granny nodded and said, "Where do you plan to go next?"

Fang Xingjian obediently replied, "I plan to enroll in the top Blue Mountain Academy."

The Blue Mountain Academy was a school for Warriors led by the military. It especially nurtured outstanding young Warriors among the humans.

The Old Granny suddenly said, "You have not yet prepared the magic prints for your first job transition, have you? I'll get someone to transfer you one million later, you can purchase ferocious beasts from the market to hasten the job transition."

Hearing the Old Granny's words, Fang Xingjian was so surprised that he could not believe what he had just heard. In Demonic City,

the job transition process was based on magic prints, and magic prints required the extracted essences of ferocious beasts from the Other World.

All this while, Fang Xingjian had been struggling to find a way to lay his hands on ferocious beasts, but he certainly had not expected that his grandmother, who did not pay him any heed, would actually help him.

However, before the feeling of surprise had even faded, the Old Granny continued, “You won’t need to go to Blue Mountain Academy. I have contacted the Mage Association for Xingchen. After you’ve gone through the first job transition, you will accompany him to the Mage Academy.”

Fang Xingchen was stunned. “Mage Academy?”

“Before a Mage goes through the first transition, he is much weaker. It’s just ideal that you brothers would work together. I want you to be his apostle. You’re the elder brother and you will have to take good care of him in the Mage Academy...”

Fang Xingchen was no longer listening to what the Old Granny was saying. The word ‘apostle’ was still echoing in his mind.

‘A Mage’s apostle’ was a nice way of putting it. There was another name for it – the Mage’s ‘Slave’. It was a kind of dark magic through which Mages bound another life to their own. A Mage’s Slave would have to abide by the words of the one who performed the spell for eternity, and any damage inflicted upon the Mage could be transferred to the Mage’s Slave.

However, the requirements for being a Mage’s Slave were very tough to fulfill. Not only was one required to have good physical and intellectual abilities, the person also had to be someone who was related by blood. Fang Xingjian and Fang Xingchen were a good example.

Fang Xingjian had put in a lot of effort and he had worked hard

for many years only to end up as a stepping stone for Fang Xingchen, only to contribute to his cousin's strength.

Fang Xingjian laughed bitterly, saying, "Grandmother, you've never shown me any concern since I was a child. The year I turned six, when I fainted from fever and almost died, it was second uncle who sent me to the hospital. You didn't even take a look at me!

"All these years, my monthly spending money have been reduced by second aunt, and I have been forced by third aunt to do all sorts of daily chores. I've put up with all these while you turned a blind eye to what was going on!

"Now that Xingchen has the talent to become a Mage, I am happy as well. But to think that you would want me to be his Mage Slave?!

"Grandmother, there's only one thing I want to ask. Do you really see me as your grandson?"

"Bastard!" The Old Granny landed a slap on Fang Xingjian's face, and looking at his stubborn gaze, she angrily asked, "Is this the way you talk to your elders?"

"If you treated me as your grandchild, I would naturally treat you as my elder! If you don't even treat me like a human, it's no wonder I wouldn't respect you as an elder!" Looking at the Old Granny, Fang Xingjian resolutely declared, "I will definitely go to the Blue Mountain Academy. Even if Xingchen is my younger brother, I will not give up my life for him."

"Haha!" the Old Granny laughed out in fury. "Since when were you the one to make decisions in this family?"

"When youngsters don't know their place, it is only natural that the elders would make the decision in their stead. Your life? From the moment you were born, you've belonged to our Fang Clan. You grew up eating food from our Fang Clan. If it wasn't for me, you would have long died of starvation in the streets! What life would

you have now?”

“I will not go!” Fang Xingjian strongly objected. “Even if I were to die, I will not become a Mage’s Slave.”

Hmph!

With a cold snort, the Old Granny’s palm swung out, sending a strong hurricane towards Fang Xingjian. The force of a suffocating pressure landed on him, making him drop to his knees.

“Your life was given by me. You will live as a member of the Fang Clan, and when you die you will stay a ghost of the Fang Clan. You haven’t got the luxury to think about all this rubbish.”

“Xingchen is now the hope of our family, and you will be his shadow, protecting him for life, even if you have to die for him!”

“No one should have to die for another!” Fang Xingjian hollered. “Since you want me to become a Mage’s Slave, it seems that you do not see me as your grandchild. Therefore, from today onwards, I forsake you as my grandmother!”

“Hahahaha!” The Old Granny was so infuriated that her face turned pale, and a ray of cold light shot up from her eyes, seeming to freeze the space around them. She turned to look at the memorial tablet behind her and said, in anger, “Fang Yueru, take a good look! This is the bastard son that you have given birth to! He doesn’t know any shame, and even refuses to acknowledge his family, just like you back then!”

“Stop saying bad stuff about my mother!” Fang Xingjian’s face turned red, and all his muscles started to tremble as he struggled to stand up.

But... the godly prowess of one who was at level 30 was not something he could withstand. He heard the Old Granny give a cold snort, and with the outburst of strong pressure she applied, he was pressed down to the ground and lost consciousness.

The Old Granny Li Shuanghua laughed coldly and headed out of

the ancestral hall. Tens of Warriors in black clothes and armor kneeled before her.

They had formed through a secret job for the first job transition, passed down within the Fang Clan. The Old Granny Li Shuanghua was the only one who knew the contents of the magic prints. They were named Black-Crystal Armored Soldiers, and along with their first job transition, each of them would get a +3 increase in the strength attribute, a +2 increase in the agility attribute, and a +4 increase in the endurance attribute.

They were all wearing alloy armors weighing more than two hundred kilograms, equipped with high-frequency long sabers manufactured by the military, and the latest magnetic rifles. Each of them was like a human tank, and together they represented Fang Clan's most powerful elite troops.

“Keep your eyes on him. Don't let him out.”

“Yes.”

[1] A poem written by Su Shi, also known as Su Dungpo, a Chinese writer, poet, painter, calligrapher, pharmacologist, gastronome, and statesman of the Song dynasty. This poem was written by Su Shi when he was missing his late wife. The English version is an extract of a translated version by Burton Watson, an American scholar, and translator of both Chinese and Japanese literature.

Chapter 4 Escape

A few hours later, Fang Xingjian had gradually regained consciousness, and realised that he was still in the ancestral hall. Recollections of his conversation with Li Shuanghua came back to him, his eyes filling with bitterness.

He wanted to leave the hall, but his path was automatically cut by the Black-Crystal Armored Soldiers. After looking around, Fang Xingjian realised that the soldiers had fully surrounded the ancestral hall.

Knowing that there was no way he could force his way out, he decided to sit down and contemplate, trying to come up with a solution.

‘Based on grandmother’s stubborn character, she’s bound to go through with whatever she says. If I don’t think up a way to escape, I will become Fang Xingchen’s Mage Slave for the rest of my life. This is definitely not the life I want.

‘But... how do I escape?’

‘These Black-Crystal Armored Knights have been nurtured by the Fang Clan since young. Although they don’t know many techniques or have any specialities, their experience is all gained from killing monsters. In addition to the growth rate of their job, their strength, agility and endurance attributes are all above 30 points.’

With more than 30 points in strength, agility and endurance, one could easily flip a huge elephant, tear apart tanks or be able to treat iron rods as if they were soft towels, all without even breaking a sweat. How could the Fang Xingjian now charge through in this situation?

‘What should I do?’

After contemplating for about an hour, Fang Xingjian was still

clueless. However, in that very moment, sounds of conversation drifted to him from outside.

“You guys can leave, mother wants me to persuade him.”

“But Her Excellency said...”

“Huh? You don’t believe me? Or are you saying that I don’t have the power to suppress him?”

“Your subordinate wouldn’t dare.”

The rattling of armours resounded as the Black-Crystal Armor Knights gradually retreated.

After a while, the gate opened, and second uncle slowly strolled in.

Fang Xingjian stared at his second uncle in astonishment as he asked, “Second uncle, are you here to persuade me?”

“Haa...” second uncle sighed. “Come with me.”

Fang Xingjian bewilderedly followed his second uncle, noticing that there was no one else around. In the blink of an eye, they arrived at the back gate of the Fang Clan residence.

“Mother wants you to become Xingchen’s apostle, but I don’t agree with it. However, she has already decided on it, and I’m incapable of changing her mind.” Second uncle shook his head, as he lightly stated, “Go on, leave. Go to the Miracle World (this was what ordinary earthlings called the Other World). Run as far as you can, and don’t ever come back here again.”

Fang Xingjian’s eyes reddened as he looked at second uncle in front of him. It was as though second uncle had turned back to the man he was before being married.

“Uncle...”

“This unregistered card has two million on it. Hold on to this. It’s a secret stash of money which I’ve accumulated over the years. If your aunt finds out about it, I’m finished.” Second uncle sighed

once more. “These past few years, I haven’t really taken good care of you. You don’t belong here with the Fang Clan. Go and search for your own path. Don’t stay in Demonic City any longer. If you do, mother will send men to capture you.”

Fang Xingjian accepted the card and replied in a low voice, “Uncle, thank you.”

Second uncle didn’t reply, as he stared straight at Fang Xingjian’s face, before mumbling to himself, “The resemblance, so alike...”

“What?”

“You really resemble your mother.”

Fang Xingjian got emotional all of a sudden. He stared at his second uncle and asked him, “Second uncle, why... why does grandmother hate me so much? What have I done wrong? How did my mother really die? And who is my father?? Why does grandmother fly into a rage whenever I ask about it?”

In one breath, he blurted out all the questions that had been troubling him and which he had kept within his heart ever since he was little.

“The matter of eldest sister... I can’t explain it clearly either. If you really want to know, wait until you break through into the Divine Realm before asking mother again.” All of a sudden, the courtyard was filled with a cacophony of noises. Second uncle nervously added, “Go quickly, they are coming in this direction. I’ll draw their attention away.”

Fang Xingjian turned back to look at Fang Residence for one last time before he swiftly ran outside in the darkness.

‘I will definitely come back here one day!’

‘Grandmother, I will prove you wrong. I’m more talented than any others. I’m the true hope of our Fang Clan!’

...

In the train station, Fang Xingjian looked at the staff member behind the counter and inquired, “It still isn’t working?”

The member of staff inclined his head as he studied Fang Xingjian’s features intently, comparing them to the photograph, and replied, “My apologies, we ran into some trouble with the machine, please wait a little longer.”

Fang Xingjian glanced suspiciously at the staff member. At the same time he took in his surroundings, only to discover that numerous sturdy, muscular men were subtly approaching him from all directions.

“Damn.” He immediately sprinted away explosively. With 9 points in both his strength and agility attributes, Fang Xingjian’s movements were as ferocious as a mad ox’s.

“He’s escaping!”

“Catch him!”

“Don’t shoot!”

Initially, the muscular men had been advancing slowly, but seeing Fang Xingjian’s actions they immediately reacted and rushed to surround him.

After evading them for a long time, Fang Xingjian finally lost his pursuers, all thanks to his higher stats when compared to normal humans.

Leaning against the wall, he breathed heavily, ‘Even the airport has been sealed? Have they made use of government relations?’ He knew that the Fang Clan was very influential. It was extremely simple for them to put his name on the wanted list, thus barring him from all methods of transportation.

‘If that’s the case, then there’s no way for me to cross over to the Miracle World through government-controlled transport systems...’

The Miracle World was connected to Earth, and the point of connection between the two was located within Demonic City. However, the connection was not a tunnel, or a door, or a bridge, but a region which was actually common territory between the two. This region encompassed a huge stretch of land and sea. One could travel there via car, boat, or even by foot.

Because of this, the territory had been jointly sealed by the various countries. If an ordinary human wanted to go there, they would first have to go through many stages of approval from the countries' governments before gaining access.

Fang Xingjian had actually prepared the relevant documents long ago, leaving a lifeline for himself. But who would have expected that the Fang Clan would issue orders to suppress him? Not only that, but as long as any of his actions indicated that he wanted to enter the Miracle World, those from the upper echelons of the government would immediately send their men to pursue and capture him.

“Since this is the case, I can only try to sneak in...”

A few of the major countries wanted full control over the access to the common region. This naturally led to other countries or powerful groups being unsatisfied with the situation, which in turn led to illegal entry.

After all, the region was at the intersection between the two worlds, so its internal structure was extremely complex and dangerous. There were many places that even the army had no power to seal.

‘If that’s the case, I’m afraid my mobile has already been tracked and it might even be leading them to my position.’

Fang Xingjian intentionally left his mobile phone on the bus before getting off, after which he walked to a nearby public phone booth and began dialing.

Du...du...du...

“Hi?” a crisp female voice answered.

Fang Xingjian replied, “It’s me.”

The other party’s voice grew heavy as she continued, “What happened? I feel as though the whole city is chasing after you.”

This was a girl which Fang Xingjian had met during the times when was learning sword arts from the dojo, and who had gradually become Fang Xingjian’s best friend.

Fang Xingjian asked, “Has the news already been spread to the city bureau?”

The girl inclined her head as she contemplated the looks of her flustered police colleagues. Walking out, she stated, “We’ve received orders from up top to capture you. What have you done, exactly?”

“Li Shuanghua wanted me to become a Mage’s Slave. So I’ve decided to leave the clan.”

The female police officer, Jessica, drew in a sharp breath before asking, “What do you want me to do?”

“I want to go to the Miracle World. I know you have a way.”

“Tonight, midnight, meet me at the old rendez-vous point.”

Chapter 5 Capture

Fang Xingjian hid in a dark corner beside a multileveled public housing, checking out the quiet streets.

A woman over 1.8 metres in height with bright golden hair and a long pair of legs was standing in the street.

As the overlapping point with the Miracle World, Demonic City was divided between five major countries. The policemen, the firemen, the city government and other such things were jointly managed by the forces of many countries, which meant that the forces included both white-skinned and black-skinned policemen.

‘All clear.’

With a pair of binoculars, Fang Xingjian looked towards Jessica, who was standing in the street, and only headed towards her after half an hour had passed.

“No one followed you?”

“Of course. No one knows that I’m on such good terms with you.”

Fang Xingjian asked, “The Five Great Clans have their own hidden means of travelling to the Miracle World. I was hoping to use the Medici Clan’s means.”

The pretty blonde before him was a member of a branch family in one of the Five Great Clans, the Medici Clan. Her situation was similar to Fang Xingjian’s. Although she had been born in a big clan, she was not highly valued.

Hearing Fang Xingjian’s words, Jessica frowned and asked, “How much money do you have with you?”

“My account has been frozen. The money that I’ve got on hand right now amounts to about two million,” Fang Xingjian replied.

“That should be about enough,” Jessica nodded. “I will add one

million to that. There's a ship tomorrow night, so you can take the sea route to the Miracle World."

Slightly hesitant, Fang Xingjian said, "There are many ferocious beasts along the sea route, as well as tsunamis caused by interdimensional storms. Wouldn't it be too dangerous?"

"If it wasn't such a dangerous route, how would you even have the chance to take it?" Jessica turned away and said, "Come along. First, you can spend the night at my place. They shouldn't have discovered our relationship."

A few minutes later, Fang Xingjian and Jessica headed off in a small car, and the two of them soon arrived to a high-storeyed apartment building. Fang Xingjian followed Jessica to her flat. When she opened the door, he could see over ten empty wine bottles on the table, and many unwashed dishes and empty containers of cup noodles in the kitchen sink.

Fang Xingjian said, helplessly, "Can't you tidy up a bit?"

Jessica kicked off her sports shoes, she lay down on the sofa, casually grabbed a packet of half-eaten chips and said, "You should be glad to have a place to stay, stop being so picky about the details. Want some?"

Fang Xingjian rolled his eyes and moved the undergarments, brassieres and such on the other sofa before sitting down. Suddenly, he felt something hard under his butt. He reached out to grab it, and found himself holding a long vibrator in his hands.

Fang Xingjian rolled his eyes at Jessica again. "How long has it been since someone last came to your house?"

Jessica blushed, quickly snatching away the vibrator from Fang Xingjian's hands, and mumbled, "I am a single lady in my prime, at the age of twenty. Can't I indulge in a bit of healthy stress relief?"

She nonchalantly threw the vibrator into her room and came out only in her underwear. "I'm going to take a shower, you can find

some food for yourself.”

With the open display of her figure and her lovely-shaped thighs moving around in front him, Fang Xingjian could not help taking a few looks.

Jessica entered the bathroom, but suddenly popped her head out again, smiling and said, “Hey, we don’t know when you’ll be coming back after you head for Miracle World tomorrow. Shall we have a round of sex for memory’s sake? You’re still a virgin, right?”

“Scram!” Fang Xingjian grabbed a tissue box by his side and threw it at her, as she laughed out loud and dodged into the bathroom.

“This woman... She is probably a virgin herself.... No... She tore it by herself.” Fang Xingjian shook his head helplessly and sighed as he lay back into the sofa.

The events of the past few days kept going round in his head. His grandmother’s viciousness, Xingchen’s talent, second uncle’s helplessness, and his mother’s photo. The scenes kept flashing in his mind until he eventually fell asleep.

“What do you wish for?”

Amidst the darkness, Fang Xingjian opened his eyes as he heard a familiar voice.

“Who are you? Where is this place?”

In the darkness, the other party seemed to not have heard his questions and merely asked, “What do you wish for?” At the same time, a purple flame flickered in the darkness.

Fang Xingjian looked at the purple flames in astonishment. The next moment, the voice asked again, “What do you wish for?”

Soon after, the purple light flared up, and the darkness in the surroundings dissipated. The place was all covered in purple

flames and surprise was reflected in Fang Xingjian's eyes.

The next thing he knew, he was sitting up on the sofa, his forehead and neck drenched in sweat.

The sound of pouring water was coming from the kitchen. Jessica said, "You're awake! I saw that you fell asleep on the sofa last night and decided not to wake you up."

She brought out a cup of coffee, looked at Fang Xingjian, who was sweating profusely, and curiously asked, "Not feeling well?"

"It's nothing. I had a nightmare."

"Alright, I have to go to work. You can stay here today. Take care. There's food in the fridge if you're hungry!"

Fang Xingjian stayed at Jessica's place the whole day, and even tried to check for news online. However, it was obvious that all official channels would not have any news on him.

Although he was a bit concerned because of his dream the previous night, as well as the illusion he had seen in the bamboo forest, he did not manage to find anything useful even after having done some online research.

Midnight came by quickly, and Fang Xingjian boarded Jessica's car to arrive at a pier.

Lights flashed in the darkness surrounding the pier, from a fishing boat quietly sitting anchored by the bank.

"This?" Fang Xingjian asked.

"Mmm, I've already made all the arrangements. You can board it," Jessica said.

Fang Xingjian turned to look at the pretty blonde beside him and said, "Thank you."

Jessica smiled, but then sternly replied, "I've checked. Fang Xingchen has the talent to become a mage, and under your clan's Old Granny's arrangements, he could be taken in as a disciple by

the Mage King. It's best if you don't ever come back."

Hearing this, Fang Xingjian immediately clenched his fists.

The Mage King was one of the few in Miracle World who had reached level 30, and was a mage who had divine powers.

A level 30 Divine Mage and a level 30 Divine Warrior were not of the same grade, based on the information which he had learned so far. The difference between them was more like a nuclear bomb and a fuel-air explosive. One was a tactical weapon, while the other was an ordinary bomb.

Fang Xingjian's clenched fists gradually turned white, as he said in a low voice, "I'll be back." After saying this, he stepped out of the car and left.

Jessica shook her head and looked at Fang Xingjian's back as he left. Walking alone in the dark alley, it was as if he would be devoured by the darkness in the next moment.

A tinge of pity flashed in her eyes, and she opened her mouth as if wanting to say something. But eventually, the words would have been ended up in a sigh.

On the other end, Fang Xingjian walked to the fishing boat and noticed a black man standing at the bow, staring at him. The black man's gaze was sharp as a knife, scanning him as if he were merchandise.

"Fang Xingjian?"

Immediately sensing that something was off, Fang Xingjian frowned. "How does he know my name?"

In the next moment, he heard the sound of blowing wind, and a killing aura swiftly encompassed him. Fang Xingjian attempted to move and wanted to dodge, but the other person's attack was much faster, and more than ten sword Qi slashed through the air towards him.

These sword Qi were strong waves formed by slashing sharp swords through the air, as layers of air particles moved extremely quickly.

The speed of the sword Qi was very fast, and their impact was not too weak either.

While Fang Xingjian was struggling to move, he received a few slashes from some of the sword Qi on his legs and chest. His flesh was cut open, and the wounds increased, gradually dying his clothes red.

The immense pain and his split flesh made him shudder as several narrow swords were placed at his neck.

Fang Xingjian saw over ten people surrounding him, each of them black-skinned men dressed in black, as if they were ninjas. Coldly, he said, "Gale Storm Controllers? You're from the Onassis Clan?"

The Onassis Clan was the only black-skinned clan amongst the Five Great Clans, and the Gale Storm Controller was the characteristic secret job type passed down within the Onassis Clan. Out of all the job types of the first job transition, it could easily rank in the top thirty of the strongest job types to go through. It was also a job type for which only the Onassis Clan knew the magic prints.

The previous sword Qi, or better yet, the air shockwave or even vacuum slash, was the unique prowess and special job skill of the Gale Storm Controller.

"Haha," a melodious laughter echoed and a bald black lady walked out. Her smooth skin was close to the color of wheat. Together with her skin tone, her slender neck and sharp chin exuded a feminine charm.

Caroline Onassis from the Onassis Clan took a long look at Fang Xingjian before she said, "Take him away."

With a bang, Fang Xinjian felt a sharp pain at the back of his neck and fell unconscious.

Chapter 6 Torture

Under the blue skies and white clouds there lay a vast and endless ocean.

The fishing boat drifted slowly, and Caroline Onassis was overcome with boredom as she looked at the report in her hands.

“Has that old woman shown any signs of reaction?”

A burly black man in front of her replied, “I’m afraid it is as rumored. Li Shuanghua did not care about this grandchild.”

“Tsk, I knew it. How could a cold-blooded old woman like Li Shuanghua give up the chance to get close to the Mage King for the sake of a grandchild she hates?” Caroline shook her head and said, “What else did those old geezers say? When can I return?”

“It’ll be another week. After this one week, regardless of whether Li Shuanghua takes action or not, we’ll need to get rid of that chap.”

“One week?!” Caroline shouted. “You want me to stay in this dratted place with no network, handphone or television for one week?!”

Cold sweat broke out on the burly man’s forehead as he answered softly, “This the Elder Council’s decision...”

“A bunch of idiots, old farts, good-for-nothings, crappy...” Caroline shouted, “Who was it that came up with such lousy idea? That cute little sister of mine?! Or that uncle of mine whose head is filled with pig’s intestines?”

No one replied. When Caroline was like a crazy roaring lioness, no one dared to reply.

Caroline spat, looking at the trembling burly man in front of her, and suddenly asked, “Is that chap awake?”

...

In the black nothingness, a purple flame was flashing in the distance.

“What do you wish for?”

Fang Xingjian shouted loudly, “Who are you?”

The voice ignored him and continued to say, “What do you wish for?”

“I want power. Power to make me invincible! Are you able to give me that?”

“What do you wish for?”

“Tsk.” Fang Xingjian shook his head. He had been dreaming the purple flames daily, but the other party would not show any reactions regardless of what he replied, and instead just kept asking him what he wished for.

The next moment, icy cold seawater was poured all over his body.

Intense pain came from his right arm.

Fang Xingjian gradually opened his eyes.

A black lady was looking at him with a brutal gaze, similar to a tiger assessing its prey.

“Hahahaha, Fang Xingjian, you’re awake?”

Fang Xingjian looked at his right arm, which kept sending signals of intense pain. When he saw the empty spot where his little finger had been, and the layer of bandages wrapped over it, a tinge of savageness flashed in his eyes. His little finger had been cut off.

“There was no other choice. We needed something to show your grandmother our sincerity.” Caroline walked to stand in front of Fang Xingjian, touched his face and said, “It’s too bad that that old woman really doesn’t like you.”

Fang Xingjian stared at her and asked, “Who are you? What do

you want?”

Caroline gave a weird laugh and said, “I am Caroline Onassis. As for why we’re looking for you, it’s very simple. The Black Mage King is looking for a disciple, but there are currently two candidates. One of them is Fang Xingchen, while the other one is Doris Onassis.

“And that old fart is only willing to take in one disciple.”

Fang Xingjian looked coldly at Caroline and said, “You guys want to use me to threaten Li Shuanghua? I can’t help but say that this is a really bad move.”

“Hahahaha.” Caroline smiled and said, “You’re right, this was a really bad move. We’ve sent her a letter along with your finger, but she hasn’t shown any reactions as of yet.

“However, this is merely one move out of the many blows we’re planning. For the next week, your Fang Clan’s business, territory and members will all be receiving all sorts of blows. That old woman won’t be able to hang on.”

“I guess it’s just too bad for me, huh?” Fang Xingjian smiled bitterly. “You guys are not just planning to snatch the position of the Black Mage King’s disciple, but you also want to force the Fang Clan down from their position as one of the Five Great Clans?”

“Hehe, the Fang Clan’s abilities have long been unfit to be considered on par with ours, and yet they are still hogging so many businesses which they cannot hold on to. This is not good. It’s not only the other great clans, there’s also quite a number of multinational companies and political groups that have their eyes set on the Fang Clan.

“We’re the first to take action, but we’ll definitely not be the last.” Caroline’s finger stroked past Fang Xingjian’s shoulders as she asked, “Make a guess. Will I kill you?”

Between her words, the area where her fingers passed by felt

sore, as if a blade had been there, and had torn off a huge chunk of flesh off Fang Xingjian's shoulder.

A terrible cry escaped from Fang Xingjian's mouth as he glared at Caroline and he coldly said, "You lunatic."

"Hahahahaha." Licking the blood on her fingers, she laughed loudly and said, "In the midst of these boring seas, I have to find some entertainment for myself."

Caroline put her hands together, and suddenly the air in the room changed. Countless streams of air started rubbing against each other, creating a loud rumbling, as if ten thousand horses were stampeding, or as if a waterfall was flowing backwards.

'A large-scale air shockwave?' Fang Xingjian focused his gaze. 'Is this the Onassis Clan's second job transition, the Grand Air Controller?'

Caroline revealed a perverse sense of excitement as she looked at Fang Xingjian and shouted, "If you're in pain, you must cry out. You must definitely cry out, ok?"

In the next moment, the many streams of air turned into blade Qi, consecutively rubbing against each other, and releasing a sharp sound before they all shot out towards Fang Xingjian.

In a moment, Fang Xingjian felt as if he was being dismembered, as if tens of thousands of small, sharp blades were drilling through him at the same time.

Endless sounds of puchi puchi echoed through the air, as fresh blood started filling the atmosphere, as if it were a faint layer of mist dispersing in the air.

Caroline let the blood splash on her, dying her clothes and skin in the color of red.

"Scream out, cry out, enjoy yourself!"

A twisted sense of satisfaction hung on her face, and her vision

started to blur.

“My dear sister, do you think you can stand above me after you have become the Black Mage King’s disciple?”

“I will not let you leave.

“No one can think of escaping from me!”

Fang Xingjian’s expression was twisted, his mouth open as he kept on shouting with terrible screams.

“Haha, guess how much we spent to buy your friend over?”

“The lady’s name is Jessica, right?”

“Five million USD was all it took for her to agree to bring you here.

“You’re really unpopular.”

As she wantonly left one scar after another on Fang Xingjian’s body, Caroline’s voice was like the cry of a demoness, echoing in Fang Xingjian’s ears.

“Haha, Fang Xingjian, you’ve never found out how your mother died, right?”

Fang Xingjian raised his bloodied head and glared at Caroline with a wild beast’s gaze, as if he wanted to swallow her whole.

“Hahaha, right, right, right, this is the expression.

Do you think that your second uncle released you for your own good?

You’re so naive. He wanted to dispose of his nephew’s Mage Slave, to pave his way when he would fight to become the head of the clan in the future.”

Caroline smiled and shouted loudly, “And your mother, hahahaha! She was a genius who had gone through the second job transition at the mere age of 16! How could she possibly have died due to birth complications? Allow me to tell you. Your mother was

beaten to death by your grandmother.

“Hehehe, did you know? Your life was destined to be a tragedy from the day you were born.”

“Impossible!” Fang Xingjian shouted in fury. “I don’t believe this! Right. Demonic City was only created 16 years ago. My mother was only 16 years old then. How could she have gone through the second job transition? You’re lying!”

“Haha, do you really think that humans only started going to Miracle World 16 years ago?”

Caroline was obviously experienced in torturing others. Each blow she dealt to Fang Xingjian gave him the most pain, but the least injury, making him drown in endless pain without the relief of fainting or death.

The most terrifying thing was her words. They were like poisonous daggers, each cutting deep lines into Fang Xingjian’s heart. She kept torturing his mind endlessly from all angles, from his birth and life to his mother and friend.

Two hours later, Caroline stopped, breathless. Her face was still red from excitement as she threw Fang Xingjian a last glance before she headed outside.

At the same time, she instructed, “Heal him. We’ll continue tomorrow.”

“Wait a moment!” Fang Xingjian lifted his head. No part of his body seemed to be intact, as if he was an overused, old, ragged toy. He struggled to lift up his head, and asked Caroline, “How did my mother die?”

“Hahahaha, I’ve already told you the answer. What can I do if you won’t believe it?”

During the next seven days, Fang Xingjian suffered from Caroline’s inhumane torture. In the beginning, he would still try to talk back, he would still scream out. But during the last few

days, he had already lost all of his strength, and did not even have enough energy to speak.

A few black-skinned men brought up the battered Fang Xingjian to the deck. Caroline looked at Fang Xingjian, who now had a lifeless gaze and showed no reaction, and she shook her head, saying, “How boring.

“Throw him into the sea.”

A black guard by her side said, “My lady, should we chop off his head before tossing him down?”

“Idiot! We’ve come all the way from the Eastern Sea. This is the Miracle World. Do you think he can still survive in this state?” Caroline asked. “The nearest coast from here is at least 200 kilometers away.

“Moreover, in a situation where he can’t even move an inch, wouldn’t it be more beautiful to have him see himself slowly slapped around by the currents, eaten by the fish, and lastly dying in solitude and despair?”

The black men in the surroundings all trembled in a cold shiver, looking pitifully at Fang Xingjian before once again lifting him up.

With a splash, Fang Xingjian was tossed directly into the seas.

Caroline smiled. “Alright, then. We can finally return to Earth!”

...

Drifting in the sea, tremors of immense pain rocked Fang Xingjian’s body.

He felt as if he had been cut into pieces, then tossed into a mixer and blended crazily in it. When he breathed in air once again, the fishy smell of the sea entered his lungs.

But Fang Xingjian did not care about it in the least. His mind was swallowed by a dark, bottomless pit of despair, and an endlessly burning fury was scorching his heart.

‘I can’t take this lying down... I can’t take this lying down.

“Caroline Onassis, that b*tch!”

Faces passed through his mind, names flashed in front of his eyes. The immense pain of his body was in no way comparable to the pain in his heart. Fang Xingjian was getting weaker and weaker, but despite that, he was thoroughly drowning in vengeance and fury.

‘Why is it me? Why – is – it – meee?!!’

Accompanying the explosion of thoughts of vengeance, fury, despair and many other dark emotions, the tattoo of the purple flames on Fang Xingjian’s neck became increasingly defined.

In the next moment, with a bang, the purple flames started to flare up from the back of his head, encompassing his whole body, and immediately turning him into a man in flames.

But although the flames were burning, when they came into contact with the sea water, they made no reaction, as if they were illusions.

‘Am I going to die?’

The expected scorching pain from being burned by the flames did not come. However, there was a numb and itching feeling extending all over Fang Xingjian’s body. He felt as if his wounds were being stabilized and... and that he would no longer die.

‘What is this?’ Looking at the purple flames on himself, a tinge of surprise passed through Fang Xingjian’s eyes.

Under the burn of the purple flames, the wounds on his body gradually healed. Even the little finger which had been cut off was quickly regenerating, growing out at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Chapter 7 Choice

Just as Fang Xiangjian was wondering what the flames in front of him were, a massive amount of information was transmitted to his brain from the flames.

It was neither words nor pictures, but more of a direct ‘understanding’, filling up his mind in a moment, making him understand what the purple flames before him were.

If you give up something, you will gain something in return. Make a wish, and if you can give up something of sufficient value, you can obtain everything you want in this world.

There were almost no redundant thoughts. Heavily injured all over his body, Fang Xingjian who had drowned in despair hollered his own wish straight at the flames.

“Power! Give me great power! A power strong enough to eradicate the whole of the Onassis Clan!”

In the next moment, an evil wholly encompassed Fang Xingjian. And then it was as if he could hear his own voice ringing out in his mind. Something was speaking in his voice.

“You can’t afford the price for this.”

Fang Xingjian frowned and he immediately recalled that he had almost nothing on him. How would he have items to exchange for power?

He asked, “Then what can I get? What can I afford? What can you give me? Something that can allow me to destroy the whole Onassis Clan!”

There was no reply, but an option appeared before Fang Xingjian, and it was the only option.

“Obtaining the topmost degree of sword arts talent in the world requires giving up 72 years of lifespan, which leaves you with only

five more years of your life. At the same time, you will never be able to feel love, kinship, and friendship, and you'll end up leading a lonely life until your death, unable to procreate, or to have any descendants.

“From now onwards, everything related to happiness in the human world shall no longer be of your concern. Are you willing to accept this?” Fang Xingjian’s voice resounded in his own head.

“Hahahahaha!”

Without any hesitation, Fang Xingjian broke into a smile, “I couldn’t ask for anything better.”

In the next second, an inhumane pain fell upon him from the heavens, and Fang Xingjian could only feel how every single bone in his body and every inch of skin was being torn apart, pulverized and melted.

Fang Xingjian had completely lost consciousness as soon as it had begun, but the changes to his body did not stop. The purple flames soared into the skies, transforming his body, mind, and brain towards a unique direction.

...

Fang Xingjian’s brows trembled as he slowly regained consciousness. He immediately felt that his whole body was still cramping with waves of immense pain, his broken bones and injured organs rendering him immobile.

However, a medicinal smell came to his nose.

“Wuliwala, waliwula...” An old man turned over to look at Fang Xingjian, who was lying on a bed.

He spoke a lot, but Fang Xingjian could not understand any of it. However, he did not say much himself. He only stared towards the ceiling, as if he was no longer concerned with everything before him.

‘I’m not dead? Did I get picked up by someone?’

‘That flame, was it an illusion?’

‘But in this state, what can I do even if I survived?’

Despair, unresigned and emotions of fury kept surging in Fang Xingjian’s mind. But the next moment, disbelief flashed in his eyes.

Name Fang Xingjian

Age 16

Occupation Warrior’s Squire

Level 9

Strength 9 (3)

Agility 9 (3)

Reaction 6 (3)

Endurance 6 (2)

Flexibility 6 (2)

The numbers listed in the brackets were Fang Xingjian’s attributes in his injured state, which now made him incomparable to an ordinary person. If not for the fact that the purple flames had retained the last bit of his life, he would have died through and through.

But this was not what he was surprised by. What felt different to him were his techniques.

Basic Sword Technique Level 3

Single-handed Sword Grab Level 2

Cross-slash Level 2

There was no change to the level, but the experience required to raise the level of the Basic Sword Technique from level 3 to 4 had turned into 0/1.

The experience required to raise the Single-handed Sword Grab from level 2 to 3 was 0/1.

Similarly, the experience required to raise the level of the Cross-Slash was also 0/1.

‘How could this be? I only require 1 point of experience to increase my level? How could this have happened?’

Fang Xingjian stared at this sight, flabbergasted. But he soon recovered.

‘The topmost degree of sword arts talent in the world ? This is the topmost degree of sword arts talent in the world ?’

“Hahahahahahaha!” He started to laugh fanatically, to the extent that tears were pouring out from the corners of his eyes. The old man who was at the side stood up and came to his side, shouting out wuliwala as if he could not understand anything at all.

But Fang Xingjian did not care about this. All he could think of was practicing his sword techniques. He wanted to wave his sword, wanted to see if his sword techniques would level up.

...

Three days later, the bedridden Fang Xingjian struggled to sit up. He seemed to have no parts of his body which was not in pain, both inside and out, but he slowly raised his arms, putting his fingers together to form a sword.

Fang Xingjian felt a surge of power coming up from the lower half of his body. It was the explosion of power coming from the muscles, and passing through each section of the muscles in his waist, spine, shoulders and elbows, swelling at the joints, and changing into a sharp piercing power as he released it from his fingers.

With a single thrust of his fingers as a sword, Fang Xingjian’s heart swelled with a feeling of everything having turned clear. His actions were as familiar to him as taking a breath, making him feel

as if he had practiced this thrust for thousands or even tens of thousands of times.

But at the next moment, he screamed out in pain and fell to the ground by the bedside, the pain in his body instantly magnifying ten times. He had overexerted himself, and had torn his wounds open again.

The old man came in and immediately started gabbling away when he saw him.

But Fang Xingjian was full of smiles, all his concentration focused on the Techniques Column.

Basic Sword Technique level 4, experience required to level up was 0/2. With merely just a thrust of his fingers acting as a sword, he had managed to level up.

The days passed by. While he was resting on the bed, Fang Xingjian did not waste his time. He tried to learn the language the old man spoke, and was soon able to achieve basic communication with him.

The old man seemed to be an ordinary fisherman, and was very poor. The medicine applied on Fang Xingjian was what he had mixed up together himself, made from medicinal herbs he had gathered, together with fish meat and blood.

Based on Fang Xingjian's observation and inference, the injuries on his body had not been left behind by Caroline. Those wounds seemed to have been healed by the purple flames. Instead, his body seemed to have suffered from huge injuries when he had been given the talent in sword arts.

It might have been because Fang Xingjian originally had astonishing physical attributes; or because he had a strong desire to live; or that the medicine was effective; or maybe because of something which the purple flames had done; but what was certain was that the injuries on his body were slowly recovering.

And after every few days, he would not be able to hold it in, and waved around with his hands and legs to practice his sword skills in an attempt to gain a general understanding of his current talent.

Even a normal wave of his hands and legs could increase the proficiency of his Basic Sword Technique. However, it was not the same for the Single-handed Sword Grab and the Cross-slash.

He had already attained level 10 for the Basic Sword Technique, with experience 3/20. Passing through each level required only very little experience, which was obviously due to the effects of the attributes given by the purple flames.

This meant that he had a type of unique comprehension of the sword which allowed him to hasten the speed at which he gained experience. Even waving his limbs around allowed him to gain experience. The Basic Sword Technique, which usually required one to put in much effort and go through tough training, now seemed very simple. Only a pitiful amount of experience was required in order to level up his techniques.

Now that his Basic Sword Technique had reached level 10, he had additional gains. Other than the increase in the speed and accuracy of the thrusts, he had also gained 1 point in both his strength and agility attributes. This was an additional increment in attribute after attaining level 10 of the Basic Sword Technique, something which Fang Xingjian had known about long ago.

In fact, most techniques would have additional increments to his attributes after reaching level 10, which was also the maximum level for ordinary people.

And most Warriors who were trained in sword arts would be able to raise this technique to level 10, therefore obtaining the additional 1 point increase to their strength and agility.

Fang Xingjian now felt that he had advanced immensely in terms of both speed and accuracy of his sword thrusts. When going through the various sword moves, he felt that all the elements of

his body were highly coordinated, as if his muscles had all joined into one.

This was a level which an ordinary person would only be able to attain after training for many years.

Chapter 8 Speedy Improvement

Rumble~~~~~

The air resounded with an incessant tearing sound, and crackling sounds came from the walls. It was the sound of air being squeezed together and then slammed against the walls.

The sound of wind and thunder rang out as if a thunderstorm would soon appear in the room.

“You rascal, are you going crazy again? Are you thinking of smashing everything in the house?” The old man angrily walked in. He saw Fang Xingjian sitting on the bed, creating a series of afterimages with the wooden rod in his hand. It was as if over ten wooden rods were being thrust out at once, not only one.

The afterimages disappeared the next moment. Fang Xingjian started coughing furiously, so much so that traces of blood were dripping off the corners of his lips.

The old man took the wooden rod away from his hands, and looked at Fang Xingjian, who was coughing non-stop. Helplessly, he said, “I told you not to move around recklessly. Do you want to die?! Do you know how seriously hurt you are?!”

Fang Xingjian replied in the Common language, which he had not mastered yet, “...I don’t have much time left.”

The Common language was the most widely used language in the Miracle World. In fact, Fang Xingjian had taken it up before, whilst in Demonic City. It was just that, in the beginning, the old man’s accent had been too heavy for him to figure out.

Later on, after realizing that this was actually the Common language and that he was in the Miracle World, he started pestering the old man to chat with him daily. Thus, he managed to increase his proficiency in the Common language by leaps and bounds.

This was because he really did not have much time left.

Indeed, since the purple flames had already bestowed the sword arts talent upon him, then it was obvious that, just as promised, his lifespan would have also been taken away from him.

Now, Fang Xingjian had been left with a lifespan of merely five years. If he were to seek revenge, five years would be very little time for the many things he had to do.

He not only wished to take revenge, but he also wanted to kill Caroline and eradicate the Onassis Clan.

He also wanted to return to Demonic City, travel back to the Fang Clan, and outrightly ask Li Shuanghua about the way his mother had died.

And all of these required power.

He took a look at his stats in the Techniques Column. Although he had only gotten up for a brief practice everyday, his Basic Sword Technique had already risen to level 20 with 0/500 experience, a level unprecedented in history!

A level 20 Basic Sword Technique. An ordinary person's Basic Sword Technique could be raised to around level 10 at maximum, and only a few talented geniuses would be able to break through this restriction and reach level 12, 13, or even level 15. But Fang Xingjian had never even heard of, let alone seen before, someone with a level 20 Basic Sword Technique.

This had all been achieved after his talent had changed for the better.

Having reached level 20 in the Basic Sword Technique, his sword thrusts had also increased in speed and accuracy. Furthermore, his attributes had also increased: 1 point in strength, 2 points in agility, 1 point in reaction, and 1 point in flexibility. It was the equivalent of having risen five levels!

...

Another ten days or so passed. Fang Xingjian walked out stumbling into the courtyard. With a raise of his arm, countless beams of black light instantly appeared as if they were black pythons, pouncing forth and tearing across the air. The black lights had swiftly appeared and then disappeared, leaving behind only shrieks in the air.

With a slight tap of his feet, he dashed towards the earth wall, and the branch in his hand once again turned into a fiery black python. He thrust towards the wall ahead of him in a graceful arc.

From the bottom of his feet to his lower thighs, upper thighs, chest, shoulders, and elbows, all the collected energy condensed into a ball as his muscles and bones made rattling sounds. Fang Xingjian felt as if he had turned into a sharp sword as he thrust, releasing all the energy from his body in an instant.

The speed from the instantaneous explosion caused a series of sharp howls in the air. Eventually, the branch knocked against the earth wall, producing a loud, explosive boom and creating a small fist-sized hole in the wall.

A level 25 Basic Sword Technique made the attack speed of Fang Xingjian's sword over two times faster than before. He could display astonishing power even if he was merely holding on to a tree branch.

However, the instantaneous explosion made it much more difficult for him to breathe. After all, he could only just manage to stand up, and the wounds on his body had not ameliorated.

But even so, Fang Xingjian raised his arm once again, planning to practice his sword swings.

He had no time left.

Therefore, along with the gradual recovery of his wounds, his training became more challenging and more frequent.

...

One month later, Fang Xingjian was practicing the Basic Sword Technique. However, he did not simply practice a single stance, but instead he practiced the whole set of twelve basic sword moves. These included the following: split, chop, burst, stir, cut, brush, intercept, stab, agitate, push, parry, and wave.

They were the basic techniques which one could easily learn from a dojo or school back in Demonic City.

Fang Xingjian meticulously continued his practice, going through the various basic stances and training the simplest moves of the Basic Sword Technique.

A minute later, the Basic Sword Technique leveled up once again, reaching the unprecedented level 30 in the history of its existence.

In that moment, Fang Xingjian also felt that he had reached the limit of the Basic Sword Technique, and that it was no longer possible to level it up any further. Checking his Techniques Column, he saw that it was just as he thought. There were no other experience requirements after achieving level 30 in the Basic Sword Technique. This meant that he had already reached the maximum level.

The increase in attributes from training the Basic Sword Technique included 2 points in strength, 3 points in agility, 1 point in reaction, and 1 point in flexibility.

Other than that, he had also gained his first specialty.

Specialty Genius Swordsmanship: an almost perfect mastery of each basic stance, allowing the individual to be able to master any sword technique with exceptional speed.

It was obviously a passive skill increasing the speed of learning swordsmanship. Fang Xingjian already had the aptitude to learn quickly. With this specialty, he wondered how much faster it would be now.

A satisfied smile broke out on Fang Xingjian's face, and the

wooden sword in his hands once again formed a series of afterimages, as if a beam of cross-shaped starlight flashed through the air, leaving a cross-shaped mark where it had struck the ground.

The 'brush' and 'split' sword movements were connected, and one would almost not be able to see any loopholes between the two. The cross on the ground was so deep that it seemed to have been created by blades or axes, and not at all by a wooden sword.

At level 20, the Cross-slash had also reached its maximum level and could no longer progress. At level 10, the Cross-slash had brought an additional 1 point increase in agility and a 1 point increase in flexibility.

At its current 20th level, the gains were an increase of 1 point in strength, 2 points in agility, and 2 points in flexibility.

Fang Xingjian revealed a carefree smile. He had been practicing swordsmanship for over ten years, but this was the first time he had felt so good. His swordsmanship was progressing at a speed which could almost be seen by the naked eye. His techniques were leveling up almost daily.

In a mere one to two months' time, despite having spent most of it lying in bed, his swordsmanship was almost equivalent to one who had been training his swordsmanship for over ten years.

Seeing himself gradually getting stronger and stronger, the feeling of contentment was simply intoxicating.

But even so, he still continued with his training. Although constantly practicing the Basic Sword Technique and Cross-slash no longer had any effect, he was actually practicing for his third technique, the Single-handed Sword Grab.

His Single-handed Sword Grab had already reached level 19 and was close to leveling up once again.

Having reached level 10 in the Single-handed Sword Grab, due to

the increase in skill mastery, Fang Xingjian had also gained a 1 point increase in strength and a 1 point increase in agility apart from the increase in dealt damage.

Fang Xingjian repetitively practiced a series of basic stances in the courtyard. Although it did not look good, the endless booms of thunder which echoed when the wooden sword sliced through the air made one feel as if each sword move contained extreme power and speed.

With the Genius Swordsmanship specialty, Fang Xingjian felt as if he had become one with the sword in his hands. Each movement, each strand of strength, and each constriction of the muscles felt as natural as breathing to him.

Finally, Fang Xingjian's fierce movements stopped, and a smile of satisfaction shone on his ice-cold face.

He had reached level 20 for the Single-handed Sword Grab, which included an additional attribute increase of 2 points in strength, 2 points in agility, and 1 point in flexibility.

Fang Xingjian's overall attributes had changed to:

Name Fang Xingjian

Age 16

Occupation Warrior's Squire

Level 9

Strength 14

Agility 16

Reaction 7

Endurance 6

Flexibility 10

Within one to two months' time, it was as if Fang Xingjian had achieved a qualitative improvement, but he had yet to fully master

the Single-handed Sword Grab.

However, in his current state, there was no way for him to compare against the massive Onassis Clan. Even so, the training during the past months had raised his confidence immensely.

‘Now, I only require sufficient sword techniques to be able to endlessly continue my training.

‘If the technique’s maximum level is high, then the training speed will also be many times faster than that of an ordinary person.

‘A hundred techniques, a thousand techniques... So long as I practice enough sword techniques, my power will continue to grow limitlessly.

‘The only thing left to do is to look for more sword techniques.’

An ice-cold killing aura flashed past Fang Xingjian’s eyes. It was as if black flames were burning in his eyes.

‘Onassis... and Caroline. I won’t let you wait for long.’

Chapter 9 Struggle

Seeking revenge would require immense power.

For Fang Xingjian, the optimal way to obtain tremendous power was studying sword arts.

And he had already thought of a way to study it in the Miracle World.

In this world, one's personal growth in the martial arts domain far surpassed that of the people on Earth. Even the strongest of the current Five Great Clans in Demonic City had relied on an enormous amount of resources from the Other World get to where they were.

Fang Xingjian must have been brought to the Miracle World by sea after he had been kidnapped by Caroline. The time that he spent on his recovery had not been wasted. He had pried information regarding this world from the old man, and found that most of it confirmed what he had previously learned in Demonic City.

In this world, one was accustomed to levels, attributes and techniques. These were thought to be as natural as the sky, the sun, or gravity.

Although he had heard rumors about the Other World many times back in Demonic City, it was Fang Xingjian's first time actually being here.

According to the old man, they were currently on a colossal continent, near the western coastline of Sinkoda, which was the biggest of the six countries on this continent.

‘However, according to the internal government of Demonic City, out of the six countries Earth is only in contact with Uranlis. The remaining five are unfamiliar with Earth to such an extent that they are probably unaware that Uranlis has already teamed up

with forces from another world.'

Fang Xingjian thought to himself, 'This seems to be congruent with what I've fished out from the old man. Ordinary people are clueless that their world is slowly being invaded by outsiders.'

'The only question is, how deep the alliance between Uranlis and Earth actually is...'

"Hey."

Fang Xingjian turned around to see the old man regarding him indifferently. He was holding a sword covered in dust, stains, and grease. It looked much like a poker for the fireplace. One which had been lying in the house for a very long time.

As Fang Xingjian turned around, the old man flung the longsword at him.

Clang!

Fang Xingjian unsheathed the sword. It lacked luster and did not exude a sinister chill. It was simply a common western single-handed sword, about 1.2 meters in length and three fingers in width. The blade was marked by nicks left behind by countless battles.

"You rascal! How dare you train everyday with such serious injuries? Are you thinking of going back for revenge? To have left you in such a terrible state... It couldn't have been an easy opponent."

Fang Xingjian did not reply to the old man's question.

Shaking his head, the old man said, "This is a sword I've kept from my days in the army. Take it. I have no use for it."

"Thank you." Fang Xingjian sincerely looked at the old man.

With that, he sheathed the longsword and walked towards the door.

"Where are you planning to go?"

“North, to Kirst. I hear that there are many institutions there training warriors and teaching skills,” replied Fang Xingjian. It was the nearest big city to the fishing village. He was planning on looking for opportunities, gathering information, and finding places where he could learn sword arts.

Fang Xingjian believed that in a world where one possessed attributes, skills, and the ability to gain strength through training, there would certainly be communities similar to clans or unions, where the strongest were nurtured.

“Kirst is far, and the path leading to it dangerous. It’s almost winter. Even large contingents of warriors might not safely survive a journey full of blizzards and ravenous wild beasts. Aren’t you afraid of dying halfway?”

“I’d go even if I were to die on the way,” Fang Xingjian paused to explain. He added, “There isn’t much time left for me.” Indeed, if the will in the purple flames had not been lying, he only had about five years left to live.

He was running out of time.

The old man stayed silent for a while. Then, he said, “When you arrive in Kirst, if you’re not dead and if you’re still keen on learning sword arts, you can go to The School of Sword Arts.”

Fang Xingjian looked back and noticed the old man’s brown eyes staring vacantly, as if he were immersed in a memory.

The old man rubbed his eyes and waved, “Go on, go on, do what you have to.”

...

Even though everyone had the possibility to become the strong, perhaps because of how strong individuals were in general, progress in civilization was slow on the mainland.

Countless villages and towns were still in a profound state of ignorance. Most people were still deeply entrenched in manual

labor, similar to Europe in the Middle Ages.

Furthermore, since the people here were mostly at level 5 and above, the majority of the commoners had become the main driving force of common labor. Some were still using horses as their main mode of transportation.

“Hurry up, hurry up! We have to reach the next camp by night!” yelled the blonde-haired green-eyed chief in charge of the trade caravans.

Amidst the trade caravans, Fang Xingjian carried a sword at his waist and almost 200 jin of goods on his back, advancing alongside the group.

...

Late into the night, Fang Xingjian grit his teeth and tore into the stone-hard black bread. Staring at the bonfire, his eyes seemed to have burning flames in them.

...

In the middle of the storm, carriages were being swept off the cliff. Agitated, the chiefs hurried the laborers and slaves, having no other choice but to join them in their efforts.

Fang Xingjian was thoroughly drenched from the storm. As he marched along the muddy mountain road, the rain was biting cold. The goods were becoming increasingly heavy as they soaked up the rain, yet his back stayed straight.

...

“Here’s your pay.” A satchel of coins was flung at Fang Xingjian. “You really won’t consider joining us to Filain? It’ll be snowing soon, and the road to Kirst won’t be smooth.”

“Thank you.” Fang Xingjian took the satchel and turned around to leave.

“You insolent fellow, the chief is talking to you!” A large man

with brown hair stood up, only to be set back by the chief. He looked at the leader in confusion, “Chief?”

He did not understand why the chief had stopped him from teaching that arrogant prick a lesson. That prick did not have superior strength, and he clearly had not yet passed his first job transition. He would at most be a level 9 commoner.

The chief shook his head without a word, a grave look on his face as he constantly gazed at the rugged longsword at the youngster’s waist.

Braving the mighty wind and snow, Fang Xingjian trudged northward, shrinking against the stinging frosty rain and against the ice-cold temperatures that made his skin turn purple. He wrapped himself tightly with a fur coat, protecting every inch of his skin from the snowstorm.

...

Under the starry sky, Fang Xingjian hid in a small pit he had dug. The bonfire beside him was growing weaker, as if it would sputter out at any moment. He shook uncontrollably, as though shaking could prevent his body heat from escaping, but his eyes were filled with the raging flames of revenge.

“Caroline... Onassis...”

“Wait for me...”

...

Fang Xingjian sprinted, leapt, and drew his sword from his waist in the blink of an eye. Drops of searing blood trickled down the blade and splattered on the snowfield, leaving a long crimson trail.

Tens of large wolves howled savagely and sinisterly in fury, chasing at Fang Xingjian’s heels. The smallest of the pack was more than four meters long, and all of these wolves looked like armoured cannonballs, tearing the air apart as they ran, and baying sharp thunderous howls.

In this digitized world, human beings were not the only ones who could become stronger. There were many strong, monstrous beasts as well.

These monsters were known as ferocious beasts, and they evolved from wild beasts which had levelled up by killing.

These countless ferocious beasts roamed the forests, grasslands, and rivers. Every year, there would be many people who travelled into the wilderness only to fall prey to these beasts.

This world had never belonged solely to Man. Most of those without formidable skills would never pass the first job transition and would probably never even leave their hometowns in their whole lives.

Fang Xingjian leapt into the flowing currents with a splash. The bitter-cold water nearly froze his body.

Looking back at the large wolves, he saw that they had paused at the waterbank, hesitating. After running alongside the river for another few hundred meters, they gradually gave up the chase.

Fang Xingjian finally found a chance to climb up the bank after drifting for two kilometers. He took off his clothes right away and started looking for flint in order to start a fire.

He stood by the bonfire, jumping continuously, swinging his sword, and exercising. His eyes shone with a beastly glint.

‘I will survive!

‘Not just survive, but become stronger, stronger and stronger!’

Be it storm, snow, or the loneliest night, Fang Xingjian never fell. He straightened his spine, eyes glimmering faintly like a wolf’s.

He kept recalling that night in the ancestral hall, the days he was on the seas to the Miracle World. The images kept replaying in his mind, making his heart colder and colder and making the fire in his eyes blaze more aggressively with each moment.

...

A man stood in front of Kirst's city gate. His clothes were torn and tattered, and his hair was long and tangled. He had the appearance of a refugee from the dirtiest, lowest slums.

His lips were chapped, and his face was pale, green, and gaunt, as if he had suffered from famine. Only his eyes still shone like stars in the night sky.

'I'm finally here.'

'Kirst.'

This man was, naturally, Fang Xingjian. He lowered his head to look at his Specialties Window. It now had an added specialty.

Beginner's Survival Instinct: evolved endurance and willpower; allows you to ignore pain and tolerate hunger; all non-fatal injuries will not bother you in your battles and struggles.

Chapter 10 The School of Sword Arts

On the western side of Kirst, Torch Tavern in the commoner district was bustling with activity.

The smell of cheap tobacco and alcohol along with the stench of sweat from a few or more than ten days' worth of not bathing drifted in the air. As the liveliest tavern in the commoner district, it was full of various gangsters, hippies, and the lowest of the laborers, alcoholics, gamblers, and prostitutes...

"Have you heard? Fei Yang Knight Academy is recruiting, and I'm planning on trying out."

"Haha, you? I remember you only managed to learn your foundation skills after five years."

"Have you heard? Traces of demons were found north of Uranlis."

"Huh, was this made up by those blasphemers again?"

Fang Xingjian absorbed bits of information one after another. This was his third day in Kirst, and he already had a general idea of the city's affairs based on what he had acquired so far.

One of the largest cities on the west coastline of Sinkoda, Kirst, was a massive ocean trading-port, as well as one of the political and economic centers of the west coast.

It was common to see black-haired and black-eyed men like him here. It was said that on the other side of the ocean, the Western Land, most people had features like Fang Xingjian.

Nevertheless, Fang Xingjian knew that they were not Earthen descendants, despite their Asian features.

Being a political and economic center as well as a trading port, Kirst was especially prosperous. As a matter of fact, there were myriad organizations providing opportunities to learn and advance

martial skills.

This was a world where skill advancement, techniques, specialties, and attributes were part of everyday life. Everyone, from young to old, had qualities far surpassing those of earthlings.

Leveling up and becoming stronger was a way of life. Each individual hoped to change his or her life by building up their strength.

In Kirst, other than the common Warrior academies, Martial Art academies, Dojos and others, there were the seven most famous academies in the city, collectively known as the Seven Pearl Academies.

The 'Pearl' part of the name referred to Kirst, the pearl of the Empire's west coast.

According to the information Fang Xingjian had acquired, two of the Seven Pearl Academies were well-known for their swordsmanship, namely The School of Sword Arts and Tresia Knight Academy.

Dave Tresia, the founder of Tresia Knight Academy, had achieved level 30 more than a hundred years ago, and he had groomed batches and batches of prominent aces, generals, and experts. Although Tresia Knight Academy had fallen behind in recent years, it was still within the top three of the Seven Pearl Academies.

The School of Sword Arts, however, paled in comparison.

The academy in Kirst was only a secondary branch. Its headquarters were in the capital, Deha. Both branches used to be the topmost academies across the entire Empire.

However, the previous leader of the Kirst branch had succumbed to injuries after being defeated in a spar, and the current chief was too young and inexperienced. The academy had thus faced a decline in recent years, eventually falling to the lowest rank of the

Seven Pearls. Some were wondering if it even deserved to still be part of the Seven Pearls.

On the other hand, it was strange that Fang Xingjian had not once heard anything about magic prints ever since entering Kirst.

It was as if transitions using magic prints had never been a practice in this land. The transition methods they used in this world were ancient and monopolized by various large organisations and the imperial family.

They also had limited knowledge about Mages, and the majority of the commoners did not understand the extent of the Mages' powers. This lack of understanding was inferior to many cultivators in Demonic City.

‘Did the Mages themselves prevent the information from spreading?’ Fang Xingjian wondered to himself. ‘Or did the earthlings do their own research and came up with the magic prints, just as the government said?’

Fang Xingjian could not figure it out, and had to continue relying on the sources around him.

“Hey, have you heard? The Black Mage King has taken in another disciple.”

“Huh? I wonder who’s so unlucky that they were taken in by those blasphemers for research.”

Hearing this, Fang Xingjian’s expression froze.

“Mage King... Onassis...” His fists were clenched so tightly they turned slightly white. There seemed to be a blazing fire in his heart.

Each sentence and word that he heard in any second during those seven days were clearly engraved in his heart.

Uranlis was one of the six countries on the mainland. It was ruled by Mages. The three strongest Mages were the only Mages who had

reached the godlike level 30, and they were known as the Mage Kings.

Among them was the Black Mage King, who had the greatest interest in Earth, and who had supported the union and exchange between Uranlis and Earth.

Earth... Demonic City... Magic prints... Onassis Clan... Mage King... Everything seemed to be connected.

Fang Xingjian instinctively knew there was a mystery to be solved here, but he also knew that now was not the time to explore it. Learning the art of the sword and becoming stronger were the most important matters at hand.

‘Then it has to be The School of Sword Arts...’

Tresia Knight Academy mostly groomed officials and royalty, and it was compulsory to study etiquette, theology, languages, military affairs, management, and various other skills. The academy also required many recommendations, strict qualifications, and a notable background. The School of Sword Arts, where anyone could enroll, would be better suited for Fang Xingjian.

Fang Xingjian had also taken interest in a rumor saying that The School of Sword Arts had been amassing sword art techniques passed down through many generations.

Thus, Fang Xingjian arrived early the next day at the entrance of the school, which was located on a street in the eastern part of the city.

On a deserted street, there was a rusty metal door not even with a gatekeeper. By the looks of it, The School of Sword Arts was definitely ramshackled.

Fang Xingjian tried pushing the door open and realized that the metal door was not even locked. He walked in with long strides, turned a corner, and found himself before a training ground with

tens of apprentices sparring and practicing sword techniques, longswords in hand.

A young man wearing a grey training garb was instructing the apprentices on their swordsmanship as he paced around the training ground. He was blonde and had emerald eyes. He looked gaunt and malnourished, the only thing that made him stand out being the imperceptibly valiant spirit he exuded.

Spotting Fang Xingjian's arrival, the young man gave a friendly expectant smile. Even though Fang Xingjian looked like a penniless wanderer, there wasn't any hint of intolerance in his eyes.

"How are you? I am Kyle, the chief here. Are you here to learn swordsmanship? We have a hundred and fifty years' worth of history, and our school is a Mecca for learning sword arts on the mainland.

"I see you have long and strong limbs. You are definitely a budding sword art apprentice. Would you like to train here with us? We will include a first job transition if you enroll here. Once you submit the tuition fee, all sword techniques are free to learn and teach..."

Fang Xingjian looked stunned for a moment. The situation in this school seemed to be worse than what the rumors said.

"I'm here to learn sword arts," he interrupted.

"Oh?" Kyle chuckled. "Good good good, but you have to pay the fees first. They're paid every half a year for a total of thirty copper coins."

Thirty copper coins. Fang Xingjian had earned around 100 copper coins on the way. The fees were fairly cheap. He nodded and passed over the money.

Kyle accepted happily with a relieved smile on his face.

"Good good good, come! I will first teach you the Basic Sword Technique of The School of Sword Arts, The Grizzly Bear Sword

Technique.” With that, Kyle picked up a wooden sword from the side and began the drill.

Chapter 11 Grizzly Bear

After Kyle finished speaking, the wooden sword in his hands rose, and with it a vigorous aura appeared around him. The sword thrust out and swept to the side, creating a distinct sound of wind and thunder.

He concurrently explained, “The School of Sword Arts has a history of a hundred and fifty years, and it was founded by those who belonged to the previous generation of Outsiders from the Western Land, when they first came to the Empire.

However, during these past a hundred and fifty years, genius swordsmen have sprung out endlessly across generations, and the sword arts of our school have long since evolved from the style of the Western Land sword arts, eventually gaining a shape of their own. This Grizzly Bear Sword Technique has been improved and modified by many masters of swordsmanship in order to turn into what it is today.”

The muscles all over his body kept twisting and turning. Although the sword was in his hands, it was as if all his muscles’ power had been wrung into a single line. However, it was different from a human’s usual body constitution. The technique had its own unique rhythm, as if portraying a standing grizzly bear swaying right and left, and training the powers of the four limbs.

“Martial arts are divided into four types, namely Nurturing, Training, Amassing and Killing. Nurturing refers to the accumulation of the physical body’s potential. It is just like how a good sword requires daily maintenance, application of sword grease and blade polishing, to make it sharper and sharper. The same goes for the human body.

“Careful nurture is required in order to develop a strong base that may allow for the further development of one’s physical body.

“The Grizzly Bear Sword Technique is a Nurturing technique

created by the masters of previous generations, designed to imitate the habits of grizzly bears, after a close observation of their movements.

“In the long run, practicing it will allow one to wring his or her body into a single line, thus gaining the strength of a grizzly bear.”

In between his words, the wooden sword trembled in Kyle’s hands, creating many afterimages. He suddenly swelled up like a grizzly bear woken up from deep hibernation, and the most powerful energy hidden in the human body exploded outwards.

A light roar echoed, as if a bear had cried out. With a thrust of Kyle’s sword, the air currents scattered the fallen leaves on the ground several feet away.

“When a bear hibernates, its whole body will tremble every few days. Thus, its muscles won’t stiffen, and its blood flow won’t stop, which would prove extremely harmful to its body. When we practice the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, the most important thing to note is the trembling, as if all living things on earth have sprung to life at the sound of the spring thunder.

“This trembling is the Nurturing technique, and in it lie the profound mysteries of nurturing the human body.”

After demonstrating the full set of the Grizzly Bear Sword Techniques, Kyle retracted his sword as he turned and smiled at Fang Xingjian. “But, while this set of sword techniques seems easy, one has to slowly grasp and tune the weight, advance and retreat, and consider each move in its turn very carefully. It isn’t possible to master this in just a short moment.

“Today, I’ll teach you a few of the simplest moves...”

One could tell that Kyle, after accepting the tuition fees, was truly professional and did not hold back anything as he shared the essence of the Grizzly Bear Swordplay in its entirety with Fang Xingjian.

Of course, this was very similar to the countless other Nurturing techniques across the world. While the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique was powerful, it was in no way considered a peerless technique. But even through it alone one could already tell that this particular martial arts system was very well developed and thought-out, having become a unique part of this world's culture.

Listening to Kyle's explanation, Fang Xingjian's gaze lit up. It was the first time he had listened to such an explanation for martial arts, and he suddenly felt as if everything had suddenly become very clear for him.

In the next moment, a new technique had popped into existence in his Techniques Column.

Level 1 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique: increases the potential of the human body and has the effect of gradually increasing strength and agility attributes.

To think that he had picked up the skill directly! It was not just that. With Kyle's explanation and demonstration, he had also started following his movements in order to practice each step of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

Within a few minutes' time, Kyle had stopped his actions, staring wide-eyed at Fang Xingjian, as if he were a monster.

Fang Xingjian waved the wooden sword in his hands, his body trembling in synchronicity with the tip of the sword. It felt as if within each tremor the muscles all over his body were breathing along with the sword's movements, as if a grizzly bear was scratching itself against a tree, the muscles and bones in its body trembling altogether.

'How is this possible? When I saw him practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique earlier, he was all in a flurry, he couldn't grasp the weight of the movements, and he was breathing heavily as if he had never trained before.

‘How could it be that he’s mastered the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique merely within a few minutes’ time, as if he’d been training hard for months?’

On the other hand, Fang Xingjian was still immersed in the joy of leveling up his sword technique. He had been gifted with the world’s best talent in sword arts, and had then trained to get his Basic Sword Technique up to level 30, thus gaining the specialty Genius Swordsmanship. Therefore, it was no wonder he could pick up sword techniques at an exceptional speed.

With the additional acceleration, he was able to master level 3 of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique in just a few minutes’ time, something which would have taken an ordinary person half a year’s effort.

While there was no increase in his attributes at level 3 of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, he felt as if the muscles and bones all over his body had been submerged into a hot spring, and as if multiple hands were giving him a full-body massage.

It was then when he suddenly noticed Kyle’s weird gaze and started to slow down the progress of his sword technique.

“Teacher, this set of sword techniques seems very familiar to me. It seems that there are many similarities between it and the Basic Sword Technique I’d learnt before.”

“Oh?”

With that, Fang Xingjian demonstrated his Basic Sword Technique to Kyle. The latter nodded with a gaze of appreciation. “Even though this set of Sword Techniques is simple and coarse, it includes the stances of most of the sword techniques in this world.

“What is even harder to come by is the sturdiness of your basics. It’s the first time I’ve ever seen this. Adding to that your talent in swordsmanship, it’s no wonder you’re able to grasp the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique so quickly!

“However, whilst in the beginning the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique is easy, you still need to accurately grasp the correct way to channel the energy within your body for later on.”

Kyle thought that he could understand the reason why Fang Xingjian was able to grasp the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique so quickly. He nodded in admiration and worked even harder in teaching Fang Xingjian. His admiration for Fang Xingjian rose even higher after realizing that although he was highly talented, he was still able to devote so much effort towards setting such a strong base for his swordsmanship.

Fang Xingjian, on the other hand, no longer dared to train at his full abilities, but held back instead. He knew that the talent which he had just shown had already far exceeded that of a normal person. If others were to find out that it would take him only a few days to level up the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique to level 20 or 30, he would no longer be seen as a talent but as a demon.

It would be good if the others were to admire him, but it would be unnecessary trouble if someone felt that something about his talent was amiss and wanted to look into it or to even put pressure on him.

Once his demonic talent was exposed, there would only be two possible options for him: to be pressured to death, or to forcibly comply to being someone else's chess piece.

Currently, Fang Xingjian only wished to remain hidden in The School of Sword Arts, and to master all the sword techniques there in order to increase his powers.

Therefore, over the next few days, whenever Fang Xingjian met Kyle he would only reveal the equivalent of the level 1 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, meanwhile secretly practicing by himself, repetitively breaking through levels, and even reaching level 12.

After breaking through level 10 of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, he finally gained additional attributes consisting of a 2

points increase in strength, a 2 points increase in agility, an increase in the body's potential, and an increase in the recovery speed from the exhaustion of his muscles and bones.

Chapter 12 Explanation

After training for a while, Fang Xingjian now had a deeper understanding of the reason why The School of Sword Arts was so dilapidated.

Kyle could be said to be the only person supporting The School of Sword Arts. He was a one-man show, from cleaning to lecturing. As for those who attended The School of Sword Arts, they were mainly little children and youngsters from the neighborhood.

Today, Kyle was lecturing on the of different categories of martial arts techniques.

“Martial techniques can be split into four categories, namely Nurturing, Training, Amassing, and Killing.” He was standing in front of all the students, explaining with confidence as the crowd listened with rapt attention.

In this ‘strength-dictates-all’ world, an individual’s level of power determined his or her future. The only way for ordinary people, or rather, commoners, to gain recognition was to raise their combat prowess. Being able to learn martial arts was their greatest blessing and also the best path they could take.

Therefore, it was many commoners’ choice. Most families would sacrifice a substantial portion of their resources just to invest into the nurture of their children’s martial arts cultivation.

Kyle continued, “Fifty years ago, the Divine Level Expert Rose Knight’s <> used the four seasons as a comparison to the four categories, Nurturing, Training, Amassing, Killing. It was eventually passed down to the future generations, who began using it more widely. I personally like this comparison a lot.

“The Nurturing Path is like Spring, nourishing all living things, cultivating the body, increasing one’s potential, and thus allowing the physical body to grow stronger naturally. It is like a seed

planted in spring, gradually developing and growing strong.

“The Training Path is like the blazing summer; intense heat shining on one’s head, akin to the extreme tempering of the body, squeezing out every drop of potential and igniting the energy obtained from the Nurturing Path. But this is also the reason why I’ve never taught you this. Your training in the Nurturing Path is still insufficient, and your bodies’ potentials are still lacking for now. If you were to start on the Training Path now, it would be equivalent to exploiting your lifespan and depleting your potential.

” The normal procedure is to wait for your basic sword techniques to reach perfection, which means getting you to level 10 or above before we start on the Training Path.

“As for the Amassing Path, it is akin to late autumn. It is both the start to the harvesting of the fruit and the end to the miserable death of a myriad living things. It speaks of a spark of life in a world of silence. This describes the bettering of the physique through one’s breathing and blood circulation, and it is essentially a qualitative evolution in one’s way of living.

“However, the Amassing Path is too profound and has extremely high requirements. It isn’t time for you guys to learn this just yet.”

Looking at the disheartened expressions appearing on his students’ faces, Kyle smiled as he continued, “Now for the last one, the Killing Path. It’s simple to speak of, since it’s purely combat and killing techniques, which can be compared to the bitter cold of winter, smothering all life.

“This type of technique is an entirely different concept compared to the usual ones, which mainly train your body.”

“Teacher, when can you teach us the Killing Path?” inquired a chestnut-haired youngster who seemed to be less than twenty years of age. He was about 1.9 meters tall and extremely muscular, giving the impression of a small mountain to people who looked at him.

His name was Ogden, and he was considered one of the most senior students at The School of Sword Arts, and even the Eldest Martial Brother. Regardless of stats or techniques, he was undoubtedly the strongest in the group of students.

Hearing Ogden's question, Kyle laughed as he shook his head. "Now is the time for you to establish your foundation. Learning the Killing Path too soon wouldn't be beneficial for the nurturing and the training of your body.

"Alright. That will be all for today. Next, we will start a round of practice for the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique."

At that moment, from the back of the class, Fang Xingjian raised his hands as he inquired, "Teacher, I have a question."

Seeing Fang Xingjian raise his hand to ask a question, encouragement flickered in Kyle's eyes. Fang Xingjian's talent, and the effort he had put in these past few days were very obvious to Kyle, so he had nothing but admiration for this student of his.

"Speak."

"I wanted to ask... When training sword techniques, after reaching level 10 one would gain an increase in attributes for the majority of the sword techniques. What is the reason behind this? What happens if a cultivator practices over a hundred different sword techniques up to level 10? Wouldn't one be invincible then?"

This was one of the questions that he had been constantly pondering recently, as it also concerned him whether his strength would continue to increase at the current rate of progress.

After hearing Fang Xingjian's question, Kyle smiled. "Firstly, you are speaking of someone who has mastered over a hundred different sword techniques. That is pretty much impossible. A warrior with an average talent would have to practice a particular set of sword techniques over a hundred thousand or over one

million times before he can be proficient in it. It would take roughly five to ten years before his sword technique could reach level 10, and at least several thousand years for him to reach this level for all one hundred sword techniques.

“Even if the person is one of those rumored geniuses with a learning speed ten times faster than others, one would need between half a year and a year to attain level 10 in each of the sword techniques. Not only that, one would still need several hundred years of relentless practice without even taking the time to eat or drink before being able to achieve this.

“Naturally, there are also legendary geniuses who would be able to achieve this. However, geniuses at this level are extremely rare. One can’t see such a talent in several decades. You might not even get to meet one in your entire life.”

After saying this, Kyle paused for a while before addressing Fang Xingjian’s other question, “As for the question regarding the increase in one’s attributes after reaching level 10 in a particular technique, the theory behind it is extremely profound. Even the experts from the headquarters might not be able to fully grasp it.

“However, a majority of experts jointly agreed upon some conjectures.

“Basically, after a new technique reaches level 10, it enhances and improves the method of circulation within a human’s body, reducing the restrictive forces around one’s muscles, bone structure and vessels. Thus it allows one’s strength, agility, and other attributes to be displayed more efficiently.

“There are rumours that the lords from the Royal Knight Academy have performed an experiment before. When martial techniques that are similar in nature reach level 10, only the first one of their kind would bring an increase in attributes. This aligns to the conjecture. Of course, the methods in the Nurturing Path and the Amassing Path which can strengthen the body, establish

one's foundation and ignite one's potential are not taken into account concerning this theory. Those are ways of transforming one's physique, and of gaining increases in attribute stats on a fundamental level.

“However, similar techniques of the Amassing or the Nurturing Path are likely to overlap as well when they reach level 10.”

Hearing Kyle's words, comprehension flashed in Fang Xingjian's eyes. The stats-boost gained from sword techniques was actually caused by the leveling up.

Simply put, if a person's muscles had the brute strength of one ton, the contradictions between the muscles and bone structure would only enable him to have 100 jin worth of strength output. Only after learning martial arts and learning how to exert strength properly would the internal dissipation of power when it passed by the bones and muscles be reduced, thus enabling a strength output of 200 jin.

Fan Xingjian's sword arts practice was precisely the cause of the increase in attributes and the additional one hundred jin of strength.

‘So that was the case? If this is true, then only one technique out of a multitude of similar sword techniques would bring stats increase, while the others would have no effect on me? Well, in any case I will only know after trying them out. Anyway, with the talent and learning speed I have now I can easily master the majority of sword techniques the very instant I learn them, so there's no harm in learning more.’

After this, Kyle once again directed and guided the students in their practice of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique. This basic sword technique of The School of Sword Arts was profound and all-encompassing, easy to learn but tough to master. However, it could strengthen one's physique and increase one's potential. As a result, the students of The School of Sword Arts would generally

have to practice it several times every single day.

However, this time round, after a few training sets, Kyle pointed to Eldest Martial Brother Ogden as he shook his head, “What’s wrong with you? How many times have I told you that what the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique needs is both physical and mental control? The crux is in the tremble. You are merely using brute strength, and this is why you’re still unable to break through to level 10. Now, each time you’re practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, you’re no longer gaining any experience points, am I right?”

Ogden lowered his head as he replied, somewhat shamefaced, “I’ve honestly been practicing eight hours every single day, but I have no idea why, ever since I’ve reached level 9, I’m no longer gaining any experience points.”

Ogden’s pain was something Kyle understood. Commoners’ descendants like Ogden could only rely on martial arts for a way out of their situation. Ogden had been training in The School of Sword Arts ever since he had been eight, and his physique had been trained to far surpass that of ordinary humans. He had a surplus of 15 points in the strength, agility, and endurance attributes, all of which he had gained through training.

Other than leveling up techniques or leveling up oneself, another way to increase attributes was to train the body daily. For example, after practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique of The School of Sword Arts, one would gain a miraculous increase in strength and agility.

However, there was a limit to this type of training as well. The higher one’s original attributes were, the lower the training’s effect would be.

For example, Ogden’s level 9 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique had already ceased adding a strengthening effect to his body. If he still wanted to gain an increase in attributes through this method, he

would have to make a breakthrough with the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

Kyle shook his head, pointing at Fang Xingjian at the side, and said, “Come, demonstrate the movements of the technique we were just practicing. The rest of you, take a good look.”

Chapter 13 Progress

Fang Xingjian did not find this unexpected as he stepped out with the wooden practice sword in his hands. He started to demonstrate the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, but he tried his best to be clumsy in his demonstration, displaying a level 2 or 3 standard of the technique.

Even so, he was still able to perform the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique close to perfection, astonishing Kyle yet again.

“That’s right, that’s right. You guys take a good look. The Grizzly Bear Sword Technique requires one to sway the neck, chest, and abdomen as well as the shoulders, just like a bear! The neck must be relaxed, and the waist must tremble.

“Xingjian’s level is not as high as the rest of yours, but his control is something you need to learn. He is already on the right path, just waiting to arrive at the destination, while some of you are taking a big detour, circling around it.”

After Fang Xingjian’s demonstration, Kyle nodded in satisfaction. “Not bad. Xingjian, you can go practice by yourself.”

After saying that, he turned to look sternly at Ogden, saying, “Did you see that? You need to learn from him. Although the level of your technique is higher than Fang Xingjian’s, you haven’t really grasped its essence. From now on, learning the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique will definitely be a smooth-sailing journey for him. Unlike you, who keeps stumbling upon so many bottlenecks.

“Continue practicing. How will you pass the upcoming Prefectural Selection if you do not breakthrough into level 10 of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique?”

Fang Xingjian walked to the side and focused on his own training as the ‘Prefectural Selection’ that Kyle had mentioned earlier flashed through his mind.

The Empire's upper echelon was mostly controlled by famous influential groups of aristocrats, and by royalty. One could only choose to join one of these groups in order to become stronger and have access to more training resources.

Unlike those of the second generation, born with silver spoons in their mouths and with inherited authority to various degrees, with recommendations and aid in their progress on different paths, commoners only had one way to climb up the ladder, namely to pass the Grand Selection.

The Grand Selection had different stages: the Prefectural Selection, the Regional Selection, and the National Selection. The Prefectural Selection took place every year, the Regional Selection every two years, and the National Selection once every three years.

Hundreds or even thousands of carefully selected elites would participate in each stage, and the country granted special privileges and rewards to those who passed the selection.

Some of them included the right to enter the Royal Academy, titles of nobility, land, mansions, tax exemptions, or even the offer of a job transition.

Regardless of the amount of training, if one did not participate in the Grand Selection, one would stay a mere commoner.

The Grand Selection was the optimal path for all commoners, as it selected a massive number of talents for the Empire every year.

‘One can go through a normal job transition in various schools, but the resources of an ordinary school cannot compare to those which are backed up by large countries.’ Fang Xingjian had long since made up his mind. ‘I must take part in the Grand Selection, starting with the upcoming Prefectural Selection five months away. I must attain the status of a Knight and get accepted into Kirst’s Royal Academy!’

That’s right. The best amongst Kirst’s Seven Pearl Academies.

Only when he passed the Prefectural Selection and advanced as a Knight would he be able to enter Kirst's Royal Academy.

Thinking about this, Fang Xingjian's gaze turned cold as his grip on the wooden sword suddenly became more vigorous. As he practiced his sword techniques, his thoughts continued to swirl around in his mind.

‘Concerning living expenses, maybe I can think of a way to get them through The School of Sword Arts...

‘What is most important is to practice my sword arts and to prepare for the Prefectural Selection.

‘The Empire's selections are spread out like this: the Prefectural Selection once a year, the Regional Selection once every two years, and the National Selection once every three years.

‘It's great timing that the Prefectural Selection is this year, the Regional Selection next year, and the National Selection the year after the next. I only have five years left of my lifespan, and this will be my only chance. If I want to take revenge and become stronger, I must climb up the ladder, so I can tap into the Empire's resources and pair them with my talent...’

Once participants advanced to the Prefectural Selection and became Knights, the Empire would nurture them through their first job transitions.

Once they advanced to the Regional Selection and became Conferred Knights, the Empire would nurture them through their second job transitions.

Once they advanced to the final National Selection and became Royal Knights, the Empire would use all its means to nurture them through their third job transitions.

From level 1 all the way to level 30, this was the advancement process for Warriors who joined the Empire.

In a moment, the stats in his Techniques Column jumped as his

Grizzly Bear Sword Technique leveled up to 18.

‘An ordinary person can only train to level 10, but I can exceed this restriction by such a margin!

There’s no problem... As long as I continue to progress like this, I’ll be able to gain sufficient power...’

Sparks of vengeance flashed in Fang Xingjian’s eyes yet again. Li Shuanghua’s viciousness and Caroline’s torture were both like venomous snakes tearing through his soul.

He raised his head to look at the surroundings. On the training grounds, regardless if they were eight or nine year old children, teenagers, or youngsters in their twenties, each and every one of the students was focusing hard on their training, perspiring profusely. None of them was slacking off.

The Miracle World’s martial arts culture was many times more developed than that of Demonic City’s. More than half the students on the training grounds were currently much stronger than Fang Xingjian had been back in Demonic City.

After giving guidance to a group of students, Kyle called out to everyone from the middle of the training grounds. “Alright, I’ll be heading out. I’ve had some things to attend to recently, and may not be here often these days. If you guys face any problems, just discuss them amongst yourselves.”

The next moment, Fang Xingjian turned around and saw Eldest Martial Brother Ogden walking towards him. It seemed as if his well-trained body was bursting out of his training clothes, making the ground tremble slightly with each step.

Although he knew that Teacher Kyle was definitely stronger than Eldest Martial Brother Ogden, putting aside true strength and looking merely at auras, Brother Ogden seemed to exert a stronger pressure than Kyle.

Ogden had been training in The School of Sword Arts since

young, continually building up his physical body. Moreover, the school had other techniques besides the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique which he had learned. However, Ogden now needed to deal with a bottleneck in his Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

Facing Fang Xingjian, the Eldest Martial Brother grinned and said, “Martial Brother Xingjian, the teacher said that your comprehension of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique is better than mine. Do you mind if I practice next to you?”

Fang Xingjian threw him a glance. Having just joined, he did not think it would be wise of him to make enemies. Furthermore, the other party had no ill intentions. Even if Fang Xingjian did not agree, what could stop Ogden from practicing beside him either way?

Therefore, he nodded and said, “It’s fine.”

Ogden nodded as well, gratified. “Thank you very much. I’ve attempted the Prefectural Selection three times so far, but failed each time. If I fail again, my dad has already arranged a job as a city guard for me. So I must definitely pass the Prefectural Selection this time.”

With that, Fang Xingjian continued practicing. Ogden beside him was imitating his practice movements as he trained the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

Fang Xingjian did not pay him any heed, but focused on his own practice. Seeing how even Ogden was following Fang Xingjian in his practice, eventually five or six other young boys who had just started their training also joined in.

“This Fang Xingjian is really good. I feel that his display of the sword technique is quite similar to Teacher Kyle’s.”

“Mmm, it really is similar to Teacher Kyle’s.”

“This is good. If we continue to practice with him, we will be able to correct our movements.”

About half of the students were practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique with Fang Xingjian. Meanwhile, in another corner, a few guys were watching him, unfazed.

A slightly gloomy red-haired guy mumbled, “This guy is really arrogant. Is he going to have us seniors, who have practiced for several years now, learn from him?”

Beside him stood a slender guy with well-proportioned muscles, akin to a perfect sculpture.

His name was Lambert, and he ranked second in seniority amongst the students in The School of Sword Arts. He was often referred to as Second Martial Brother. Similar to Ogden, he had reached the pinnacle of level 9, but had yet to go through the job transition. He had picked up various sword arts concurrently, and in terms of abilities he was second only to Ogden.

His companion by the side said, “That’s right. He’s trying to teach us, when he’s only been here a few days.”

“Shall we teach him a lesson?”

“What’s there to teach?” Lambert gave a cold laugh and turned away. “Remember, our real goal is the Prefectural Selection. This time around, I will definitely leave this place and enter the Royal Academy. Meanwhile he’ll have to stay in The School of Sword Arts and train for at least a few more years. Forget about such trivialities.

“Alright, spend your time wisely on practicing sword arts. The Prefectural Selection is only five months away.”

...

A few hours later... No matter how strong Fang Xingjian’s body was, he started to feel a gradual ache originating from the muscles in his limbs and body. He immediately stopped to take a short break.

After all, he was only human and not a robot. His body was

experiencing fatigue.

Chapter 14 Focus

“Obtaining the topmost degree of sword arts talent in the world requires giving up seventy-two years of lifespan, which leaves you with only five more years of your life. At the same time, you will never be able to feel love, kinship, and friendship, and you’ll end up leading a lonely life until your death, unable to procreate, or to have any descendants.

“From now onwards, everything related to happiness in the human world shall no longer be of your concern. Are you willing to accept this?”

‘Of course.

‘Bearing such an enormous grudge, of course I would like to have my revenge! How could I not want power?’

Fang Xingjian was on the training grounds. Recalling the price he had paid, his cold eyes lit up once again with killing intent. The speed of the sword in his hand rose, as if to eradicate everything before him.

“Xingjian, Xingjian! Are you alright?”

Fang Xingjian came back to his senses, realizing that everyone was staring at him, stunned. The tip of his sword was right at the chest of another student.

“I’m sorry, I’m going to take a break.” Shaking his head, Fang Xingjian sheathed his sword and headed to a corner at the side.

About ten more days passed by. Looking at his Techniques Column, Fang Xingjian could tell that the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique had reached level 27. The additional attributes were a 4 point increase in strength and a 4 point increase in agility. The potential of his physical body had increased a lot, bringing along improvements in his recovery speed after the exhaustion of his muscles and bones.

Other than the attributes created by the release of his body's potential, the effects of his daily practice of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique had far exceeded that of an ordinary student. Day by day, he could feel his muscles and bones being nurtured and growing as if he were an evolving seed, as if he had returned to the time when he had been an infant. As a result, his appetite had greatly increased as well.

Although there had been no changes to the five major attributes on his Stats Window, he believed that if he kept going with his practice of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, it would only be natural for his body to become stronger and for his attributes to increase.

Within almost a month's time, Fang Xingjian had consecutively picked up the Eagle Sword Technique and the Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique.

Out of these two, the Eagle Sword Technique was one of the basic sword techniques in The School of Sword Arts. It complemented the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique well, and it was able to fully tap into the the human body's potential, strengthening its attributes.

On the other hand, the Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique was a basic dual-wielding sword technique created by the Empire's Sword Saint, St. John Tenauer. Training the body's flexibility, reaction, movements and joints, it was widely used in the military, and was eventually adopted even by major academies and factions, thus becoming a must-learn basic dual-wielding sword technique.

Within ten days or so, Fang Xingjian had not only reached level 27 for the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, his Eagle Sword technique and Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique had also reached level 12, and 9 respectively.

He had gotten his first attribute increase from the Eagle Sword Technique, which included 1 point in agility, 1 point in reaction, 1

point in endurance, and 1 point in flexibility, along with an increase in the body's potential, in its physical strength, and in the mind's and body's agility.

As for the Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique, he was about to reach a breakthrough soon. He decided to buck up and practice until he would reach level 10.

He had devoted all his time to the tough training, to the extent that his endurance had also increased by 1 point.

If others were to find out that he had spent just slightly over 10 days to attain the level of training which would take others over 10 years, he would probably be considered the top genius across the world, right away.

But even if he would hold back on revealing his actual powers and would keep a low profile, Fang Xingjian had already attracted quite a lot of attention within The School of Sword Arts, as he had managed to pick up three sword techniques within merely over 10 days' time. It would have probably taken one to two months for a person with mediocre talent to grasp these three sword techniques.

However, talent was something that others could only be jealous of. As a result, because the students were full of envy and admiration for Fang Xingjian, even more of them were putting in effort into their practice, for fear of being left behind.

Meanwhile, Teacher Kyle did just as he had said, appearing only once in the morning and once in the afternoon, giving guidance before he quickly took his leave.

When the students had questions during their practice, they would look for Ogden, Lambert, or Fang Xingjian.

“Martial... Martial Brother Fang?”

Fang Xingjian raised his head and saw a silvered-haired young girl standing before him. The young girl seemed very shy, staring at the ground. After gathering enough courage to raise her head,

she immediately lowered it again like a startled deer once she exchanged a short glance with Fang Xingjian.

This young girl's name was Vivian, and she was considered a rare beauty amongst The School of Sword Arts' students. Since females were also allowed to train and to get stronger, their social status was not too far from that of the males. Many prestigious powerful Warriors had been women, including the Rose Knight who, as Kyle had mentioned before, was the first to compare the four types of martial arts with the four seasons.

Because of her good looks, Vivian was quite popular amongst the students in The School of Sword Arts, and there were quite a few young boys who had a crush on her.

Following Fang Xingjian's sudden appearance, these past few days everyone had figured out the fact that he was a genius with the sword, and even more students had started practicing with him. Vivian was one of them.

"What's the matter?" But, no matter how beautiful she was, it was impossible for her to leave any traces on Fang Xingjian's heart since he had lost the feeling of love.

Hearing his cold tone, Vivian's eyelashes trembled, as if she would break out in tears at any point. She spoke in an extremely soft voice, saying, "Martial... Martial Brother Fang, I haven't had much pro... progress in the Eagle Sword Technique recently." Her hands were entwined, her tone was shuddering and extremely feeble, making it seem as if Fang Xingjian was bullying her.

"I think that Martial Brother Fang is very talented and good with the sword. Can I trouble you to give me some pointers?"

"If you want to learn, you can observe from the side. I have no time to give guidance."

"Huh?" Vivian raised her head and saw that Fang Xingjian had already found a spot a quite a distance away and had started his

practice. She bit her lips, but continued to follow Fang Xingjian's movements, practicing her sword technique.

During the next few days, Vivian continued to stay around Fang Xingjian, serving him tea, water, and even food, trying her utmost to please him. The other students were all full of envy.

From a distance, Second Martial Brother Lambert was squinting his eyes at the sight. He gave a cold, disdainful laughter.

'Genius? Not every genius can pass the Prefectural Selection. It'll be quite a few years before you'll be able to pass. By then, I'll have graduated from the Royal Academy and would be on my way to participating in the Regional Selection.

'The real battlefield is during the Empire's selections.'

After giving it some thought, he calmed his thoughts and focused on his training. Behind him, there was another group of students following him as he practiced.

Beside Fang Xingjian, Ogden had not glanced at Vivian at all, devoting all his attention to practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique. It was as if the sword in his hand was the only thing left in the world.

The other students in the training grounds had also been distracted only for a short moment, and most of them had directed their focus to their training once again.

The Grand Selection. Passing the Prefectural Selection and becoming a knight. Everyone was clenching their teeth as they headed for their dreams.

Fang Xingjian repetitively practiced the twenty-one movements and stances of the Tenuer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique and unknowingly got immersed in it. He only felt that the two swords in his hands, combined with different stances and grasps, had gradually evolved into various combinations. An overwhelming sense of mystery enshrouded him, continuously

correcting his movements.

Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique level 13. An additional 1 point for agility, 2 points for reaction, 1 point for flexibility, plus an increase in the flexibility and strength of joints and ligaments, which raised the consistency of attack and sword practice.

By the time Fang Xingjian felt that all his four limbs aching, his Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique had increased another level. He came to his senses and noticed that night had already fallen, the moon and stars filling up the sky. But at least a third of the students were still there, still practicing hard. There were also five or six students who had just come out of the canteen and were doing warm-ups, getting ready to continue with their practice after a short break.

It was as if a sense of urgency had swept through the air.

Fang Xingjian took in a deep breath as he further drowned himself in sword practice.

His five major attributes had changed to strength 18, agility 22, reaction 11, endurance 7 and flexibility 12.

Chapter 15 Knight

In the morning, before the sky had fully brightened, many students from The School of Sword Arts had already rushed to the training grounds, yawning.

It was four and a half months before the Prefectural Selection, and most of the students from The School of Sword Arts had planned to register. There were a few of them, like Ogden, who had participated in the selections many times but had ultimately failed. This group of students worked even harder than usual in practice, only heading to sleep late at night.

This was also because the Nurturing martial arts were not harmful to the body, and after adjusting to the intensity of workout, one could practice them daily for long stretches of time.

Not long after, Kyle also came out from his room, coughing a few times. Everyone started their practice under his guidance.

Just as he had mentioned earlier, Teacher Kyle seemed to have become busier recently, and the time he spent giving guidance became shorter and shorter each day. However, his energy seemed to increase by the day, like a rusty sword regaining its glamor.

About an hour later, the morning practice ended, and everyone headed for the canteen. All the food in The School of Sword Arts' canteen was prepared by a kitchen helper hired by Kyle.

Breakfast was two pieces of black-colored bread, each the size of a fist. Lunch was a piece of pork the size of an infant's palm, a bowl of vegetables, and a piece of bread. The two meals cost 4 coppers overall.

Most commoners only ate breakfast and lunch, skipping dinner.

Fang Xingjian also headed for the canteen. At the side, there were a few students who took out dry rations they had prepared themselves. These students could not afford to have breakfast in

The School of Sword Arts. Fang Xingjian could not bear the cost either, but it was even more difficult for him to cook for himself or to go out for food. The former wasted time and the latter was too expensive.

After collecting two pieces of black bread from the kitchen helper, Fang Xingjian started chewing on them. The black bread was mixed with wheat skin and sprout, crushed together in the process when wheat was ground into flour. The texture was very poor and coarse, and the taste even had a hint of sourness.

Although the food was coarse, it was filling, nutritious, and easily digestible. It was the type of food that commoners ate the most.

Fang Xingjian finished his bread in two or three bites, but his stomach had yet to be filled. People who trained as much as they did required a larger amount of food.

If they would have been able to enjoy meat, vegetables, and fruits on a daily basis, the results of their training would have greatly improved.

But in reality, they had no money...

Fang Xingjian looked around him and saw that most of the students had gobbled down their share of bread, but still seemed unsatisfied.

Students would generally start training from the age of seven or eight. Most of their time would be spent on training. Thus, not only were they unable to contribute to the family's income, they also became huge burdens.

This was why all the students treasured their food.

As for those descending from families of aristocrats or Knights, not only could they go ahead with their practice without any worries, they could also get the guidance of renowned teachers. In addition, they could obtain a large amount of nutrients from their good food, which allowed their physiques to far surpass those of

ordinary students.

“If only I could get a bit more...” Fang Xingjian thought to himself.

At that moment, Vivian walked to Fang Xingjian, holding out half a piece of black bread. She said, “Martial Brother Fang, this is too much for me to finish. You can have it.”

Gulping down his saliva, Fang Xingjian eventually shook his head and said, “No need.”

“It’s fine.” Vivian smiled, and it was as if a beam of warm sunlight had shone on Fang Xingjian’s chest. She pushed the bread into Fang Xingjian’s hand and said, “You can have it.”

Fang Xingjian knew that since he needed to become stronger and needed to take revenge within five years, he could not let go of even the tiniest opportunity to grow stronger. He looked at the piece of bread in his hand and hesitated for a short moment before his hunger got the better of his pride, and he quickly gobbled it down.

At the same time, Fang Xingjian mumbled, “This afternoon, I will guide you in your Eagle Sword Technique.”

Vivian’s eyes lit up. “Thank... Thank you, Martial Brother!”

Fang Xingjian did not say much, only thinking to himself, ‘While I spend every night under the bridge, food alone is costing me almost all of my money. It’s time to think of a way to earn money.’

However, while he was still thinking about how he could earn money, he heard noises coming from the training grounds.

A golden-haired youngster was standing before Teacher Kyle. The youth had straight brows and bright eyes, and his golden hair shone with a dazzling glow underneath the sunlight. Both his handsome face and his exquisite clothing made him seem like Prince Charming to all the female students. The silver-plated sword at his waist was also a cause of envy among the commoner

students.

However, compared to the dazzling golden-haired youth, what was even more striking was the sturdy man standing beside him, talking with Kyle. Just like Fang Xingjian, the man had black hair, black eyes, and yellow skin. It was obvious that he was one of the westerners in this world, and not a native of the Empire.

Even so, westerners were not really considered rare in the Empire. Compared to his appearance, the blue suit he was dressed in drew more attention.

“Is that Knight attire?” a student whispered.

Knight attire was made of materials from three extremely strong ferocious beasts, namely the Dragon Bird, the Fire Unicorn, and the Sturgeon Unicorn. Each piece of Knight attire was meticulously produced by the country’s armory. Only those who were able to pass the Empire’s Prefectural Selection and become Knights would be able to obtain the Knight attire.

Also, each set was equipped with the ability to fend off fiery arrows, being light as a feather and impenetrable at the same time. They were even said to be a treasured defensive item of the highest quality, many of them becoming the heirlooms of many families, despite the fact that anyone who was not a Knight would be sentenced to death if they wore one.

It was all because of the identity represented by the ones wearing these suits – the Knights. Every year, there would only be ten privileged individuals from the Prefectural Selection across different prefectures, carefully chosen from thousands of participants.

Looking at the Knight before them, or rather at the Knight attire, flames of envy lit up in the eyes of many of the students.

Second Martial Brother Lambert clenched his fist and thought to himself, “This time around, I must definitely pass the Prefectural

Selection and become a Knight.”

“Kni—ght.” Eldest Martial Brother Ogden clenched his teeth, feeling more determined than ever. “I must definitely become a Knight. As long as I become a Knight, I will be exempt from military taxes and be granted land. With these, big brother would not have to stay single, and our parents would not have to sell off our youngest sister...”

Becoming a Knight made one exempt from paying military taxes, and also granted one land from the country’s funds. One would be able to fully focus on their training from then on, no longer distracted by daily miscellaneous affairs. The best thing was that only the Royal Knight Association would be able to conduct a trial for Knights who had broken the law. Ordinary officials did not have the right to put them on trial.

Looking at the Knight before him, what Fang Xingjian thought of was not the superiority of his identity, but ‘Has this fellow already completed his first job transition?’

Warriors in Demonic City used magic prints to complete job transitions, unlike the people in this world. Fang Xingjian had asked around long ago about how they performed job transitions.

Similarly, they would reach bottlenecks at levels 9, 19 and 29, and they would no longer be able to gain any experience through reading, learning, training, and killing monsters.

At that time, only when they entered a secret realm could they break through the bottleneck and undergo the job transition.

Chapter 16 Kaunitz

Fang Xingjian did not understand what the so-called secret realms looked like, nor did he know how to complete a job transition or which job to choose. The students did not know either, and Kyle had never explained the process.

In this world, the government and the major sects controlled all the job transition channels. One had to be acknowledged by the government or by a major sect before being allowed to enter a secret realm.

As for the job transition specifics, these were kept under wraps by the most influential groups, the commoners thus being left clueless.

In case one desired to enter a secret realm for an official job transition, one had to join a clan and become its disciple, putting the clan's interests above the country's.

Alternatively, one could compete as an average student in the Empire's selections, in order to obtain the same status as those of the middle-ranking class, such as the Knights.

Of course, regardless of the chosen option, one had to pass layers and layers of professional examinations.

Initially, Fang Xingjian had considered entering The School of Sword Arts in order to become a disciple. Afterall, swordsmanship was its forte, and The School of Sword Arts' headquarters in the Empire's capital city was renowned across the whole mainland.

The truth was that, either intentionally or not, Kyle had been sounding him out regarding his interest in becoming an official disciple and leaving for the headquarters in order to train there.

However, Fang Xingjian gave up the thought in the end, because of an undisputed principle.

In this world, the Empire's royal family was the biggest faction.

This faction of royalty could select any of the country's best talents, defeat hundreds and thousands other factions, and control the country's natural resources. It was definitely the greatest and strongest faction.

In five years, Fang Xingjian wanted to become strong, seek revenge, and improve himself as fast as possible. Evidently, he had to join the strongest power in order to become the strongest and to accomplish all these.

He trusted his abilities. He believed that he would be able to pass the Prefectural Selection and become a Knight, to pass the Regional Selection and become a Model Knight, and even to pass the National Selection and become a Royal Knight.

In other words, if Fang Xingjian, with his abilities, could not do it... then who could?

On the other side, the black-haired Knight who was talking to Kyle noticed the people's envious and adoring looks and laughed casually. He had seen far too many such gazes and thought nothing of them. He then nodded to Kyle and said, "Then, Teacher Kyle, so it shall be."

With that, he gave a short nod to the golden-haired youngster, and turned to leave.

Kyle clapped his hands to gain everyone's attention. "Alright, stop staring. There are a few things that I want you all to know." He waved at the golden-haired youngster, and with a benevolent look, he said, "This is your new classmate, Kaunitz Tresia. From now on until the Prefectural Selection, he will be learning the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique and the Eagle Sword Technique here, with the rest of you.

Kaunitz will be taking part in the selections as well, so everyone, help each other out and learn from each other!"

"Kaunitz Tresia?"

“Doesn’t this name sound familiar?”

“Hey, could he be the Kaunitz Tresia?”

“Darn, don’t tell me that the Knight was their retainer!”

“He’s truly a man who has inherited centuries of nobility.”

Second Martial Brother Lambert’s eyes narrowed and locked on the person before him, Kaunitz Tresia. He thought to himself, unconvinced, ‘Is this really Tresia Knight Academy’s super genius, Kaunitz Tresia?’

‘The entire Tresia Knight Academy belongs to his family. Why would he come to The School of Sword Arts to train?’

‘Wait. It was rumored that he had already learnt more than five Tresia Knight Academy sword art techniques even before he turned twelve. He’s now a seventeen-year-old. Could he have already perfected all levels of the academy’s seven sword art techniques? Is that why he’s here? To learn new sword art techniques from the renowned The School of Sword Arts?’

‘How could this be?’

Alarmed by his own conclusions, Lambert clenched his hands tightly. ‘It is said that Kaunitz was focusing on practicing his swordsmanship in the past, and did not participate in the Prefectural Selection. Is he going to enter in this coming selection?’

‘I could never rival such a genius. Not someone who’s been groomed by his entire noble family since young.’

‘Darn! The Prefectural Selection has yet to start, and one of the ten places has already been taken...’

The students’ faces expressed a mixture of anxiety, shock, and envy, but the golden-haired Kaunitz stared back at the crowd with a cold, aloof gaze. He chose to ignore all of the friendly smiles and greetings from his fellow students.

After all, when compared to Tresia Knight Academy, The School

of Sword Arts was just trash. He was destined not to stay here for long.

Even passing the Prefectural Selection was simply to be expected of him. His goal was to come out on top in both the Prefectural Selection and the Regional Selection in the following year, consecutively passing both selections to become a Model Knight.

“Alright. Everyone, back to practice! There are only another four and a half months until the Prefectural Selection. All of you had better make the most of it!

“Kaunitz, come here. I’ll teach you the Eagle Sword Technique and the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique,” Kyle said as the rest of the students resumed their training.

In the following days, since Kyle had to teach Kaunitz, the leftover time dedicated to explaining to the other students dwindled. Voices of discontent arose among the students.

Only Fang Xingjian stayed focused on his sword training. His current goal was to perfect all levels of the three sword techniques he had learned.

He had also found some manual work the past nights, but it made him physically exhausted. The reduced hours of sleep also resulted in insufficient rest, which could harm his body in the long run.

He was planning on finding alternative ways of earning some money.

After the morning training that day, Kyle clapped his hands and called everyone over to him.

“All of you have been training hard. Ogden, how’s your Grizzly Bear Sword Technique?”

Ogden’s face lit up, saying, “Teacher, my Grizzly Bear Sword Technique has reached level 10. I’ve almost achieved 20 points in my strength and agility attributes. There’s hope for the Prefectural Selection now!”

Kyle nodded, looking satisfied. “Not bad. You were my biggest worry, but since you have reached level 10 in three sword techniques, I am relieved.”

Kyle continued, “I have decided to participate in this year’s Tournament of the Sword Heroes in The School of Sword Arts, and may not have time to teach the rest of you. From now on, I will pop by only once every morning. You have to train diligently by yourselves. Practicing the sword arts primarily depends on oneself.”

“Tournament of the Sword Heroes?” Fang Xingjian frowned. The Tournament of the Sword Heroes referred to the academy’s selection system, which emulated the Empire’s selections.

Apparently, Kyle leaving early and returning late, even the appearance of the black-haired Knight, and Kaunitz studying in The School of Sword Arts all probably served as preparation for the Tournament of the Sword Heroes.

Kyle went on, “Ogden, you have reached the maximum level for these three sword techniques, and you have also reached a bottleneck in the physical training of your body.

“From now until the Prefectural Selection, maintain your health and body condition. You can relax...

“Lambert, your reaction and flexibility are above Ogden’s, but remember to be modest. Your greatest weakness is that you underestimate the enemy too often...

“Xingjian, the time you’ve spent training is too short. Don’t be too nervous in this selection, just treat it like a rehearsal...”

At last, Kyle asked, “Oh, right. I will be away for a fairly long time. Who is willing to manage the school on my behalf?”

As his voice died out, all the students fell into silence. Evidently, the Prefectural Selection in four and a half months was on everyone’s minds, so they wanted to fully focus on their training.

No one was willing to help Kyle with the school.

Kyle sighed and decided not to force them. As he was about to leave, Fang Xingjian raised his hands slowly, asking, “Are meals included?”

Kyle smiled and nodded. “Included.”

Chapter 17 Watch and Learn

Fang Xingjian heaved a sigh of relief. He had not expected the problem of food money to be resolved so easily. With this, he would be able to devote all his energy to sword practice.

As for helping Kyle with the management of the martial school... With his talent in the sword arts, he was not afraid to waste such a little amount of time. After all, there was not much work to be done now that The School of Sword Arts was so run down.

Following this, Fang Xingjian was called by Kyle to the side of the training grounds. Looking at this disciple of his, Kyle was very satisfied.

To him, Fang Xingjian was good in terms of both talent and moral quality. While it was understandable that the rest of the students had stayed silent, he could not help but feel disappointed.

“Xingjian, there aren’t many people in the school now, so there isn’t much work you need to do. Firstly, the food. However, since Auntie Akele has been working as a kitchen helper in The School of Sword Arts for over twenty years, she usually doesn’t make any mistakes. You just need to do a rough check.

“The next thing would be cleaning the place.

“And the organization of the tools, as well as their repair. If things are broken, you can head to the east of the city...

“I’ve kept the spare wooden swords in..

“As for cleaning the toilets, you can get the students to take turns cleaning them up...

“As for the dishes, since Auntie Akele is getting on in her age, you can help her out if she’s unable to manage...”

There were not many things to take care of, but Kyle listed out each issue in detail, and within the wink of an eye, over an hour

had already passed.

He smiled and said, "I've become more naggy. Alright. I will still return to the school every night. If you have any problems, just ask me in the morning."

Fang Xingjian nodded and said, "Teacher, please rest assured. I will make sure everything is settled."

"Mmm." Kyle took a look at Fang Xingjian, and seeing that he had no intention to leave, he asked, "Is there anything else?"

"Teacher..." Fang Xingjian hesitated for a moment before asking, "I'd like to learn another set of sword techniques..."

Kyle frowned and said, "Learn another set? Xingjian, you are truly talented. But still, you can't bite off more than what you can chew. You must understand that each person's energy is limited. Although you're talented, it would be just your limit to fully master the Eagle Sword Technique, the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique and the Tenuer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique within two to three years. If you divert your energy to learning other sword techniques, it will delay your progress.

"You must understand that Ogden and the rest have already spent close to ten years doing tough training, but you've only just picked up these three sets of sword techniques."

Fang Xingjian had expected this, and presented the explanation he had prepared beforehand. "Teacher, I understand. It's just that I've recently run into a bottleneck with these techniques' training, and the increase in proficiency is lesser and lesser. Therefore, I'd like to take a look at other techniques so that I can draw reference from them, and see if I can gain further progress."

"Draw reference?" Kyle laughed out loud and said, "With your puny sword skills now, if you were to look at other sword techniques which you hadn't previously learned, it would only affect your mastery of the sword techniques you already know. It

may even put obstacles in the way of your progress.

“Are you having these thoughts after meeting Kaunitz?”

Kyle shook his head. “Don’t compare yourself to him. He is truly a genius, and has received the full nurturing of the Tresia Clan since young. The food expenses spent on him so far could probably be more than enough to last you for ten generations.

“Moreover, he has also fully mastered Tresia’s sword techniques, and has come here only to pursue specialties.”

“Specialties?” asked Fang Xingjian, surprised.

“Mmm. A person’s fighting capacity is dependent on his attributes, skills and specialties. Kaunitz is picking up new sword techniques in order to complete the requirements for ‘Sword Specialist’, namely fully mastering ten sword techniques.”

“I see.”

Realization flashed in Fang Xingjian’s eyes. At the same time, he also understood that he would be unable to convince Kyle, and so he did not insist, but simply nodded in approval. After getting a few pointers from Kyle, he returned to the training grounds.

Thereafter, Kyle waved and called Ogden over to him.

“Ogden, you have now fully mastered all three basic sword techniques and have built a strong base for your muscles and bones. Now, I will impart to you our school’s Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, Nine Yin Divine Sword Technique and Nine Heavenly Divine Sword Technique.”

Ogden was very agitated. “Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, Nine Yin Divine Sword Technique and Nine Heavenly Divine Sword Technique?”

“That’s right. The Eagle Sword Technique, the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, and the Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique all aim to train the muscles, and to toughen the

bones, as well as the vital energy and blood. But the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, Nine Yin Divine Sword Technique and Nine Heavenly Divine Sword Technique are different. They were brought over from the other side of the world, when a few unparalleled swordsmen crossed the seas from the Western Land.”

Kyle continued, “These three are nurturing techniques which nurture and strengthen the organs, simultaneously improving one’s physique.

“Look at Kaunitz, his attributes far surpass yours. That’s because he has fully mastered all of Tresia’s basic sword techniques.

“It’s not just that his muscles and bones are as tough as rock, but his organs are also compact. His attacks, his body’s ability to absorb nutrition and his explosive power have all been greatly increased.

“Add to that the fact that he has been enjoying only the best food since young, and that he’s had an endless supplies of mystical medicinal supplies, and you’ll see the reason why he is able to surpass you by far in attributes.”

Ogden had now understood. “I see.” But, thinking of how he would also be taking up such sword techniques, he could not suppress the excitement in his heart.

“You must know, however, that out of these three sword techniques, I can only teach you the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique. If you still wish to pick up the other two sword techniques, you must first pass the certification test^[1] and join as an official member of The School of Sword Arts.”

Most factions and schools would only teach the students means to train up their muscles and bones, also known as external techniques.

As for the cultivation of internal strength, it required a more profound set of techniques, so students were merely given a little

taste of it. Only those who passed the tests and enrolled as official members of the school would be allowed to learn them.

That is, unless the person was like Kaunitz who was a direct descendant of a great clan. Only then would one then be able to inherit the Tresia's sword techniques which are only passed down to internal disciples, but yet still participate in the Grand Selection.

Kyle looked at Ogden and asked, "Now that you've fully mastered all three basic techniques, I will follow the custom and ask you. Do you want to enter The School of Sword Arts?"

Ogden stayed silent for a while before saying, "Teacher, could I give my reply after the Prefectural Selection?"

Kyle replied, "Do you think that's possible?" He shook his head, disappointment flashing in his eyes. "Forget it, I will not force you. Let's just carry on with the training.

"Remember that the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique trains the organs. But how would mere humans be able to control the organs directly? The answer is that we need to use sword techniques in order to direct the blood flow towards the organs, and thus cultivate them from inside.

"Nine Yang refers to the heart, liver, spleen, lungs, stomach, the small intestine, the large intestine, and the two kidneys.

"Through the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, use the movements of the muscles and bones to force the blood to move and massage the organs..."

Fang Xingjian had noticed Ogden being called over, and when he saw Kyle demonstrating a set of unfamiliar sword techniques, he raised his concentration to 120%.

Although he appeared to be practising his own sword technique, he was in fact focusing most of his energy on observing Kyle.

Two hours later, Kyle had ended his demonstration, and he was

monitoring Ogden's practice of the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, occasionally giving him some pointers. "No, no, you must relax your stance and imagine that you are compacted into a lump, focusing all your energy onto your stomach.

"Alright, alright, let's stop here. I've taught you all I could. The rest relies on your own comprehension."

Ogden looked at Kyle, who was leaving in a hurry, and sighed. He knew that his two recent choices had disappointed his teacher. Moreover, now that his teacher had to prepare for the Tournament of the Sword Heroes, it was impossible for him to focus all his attention on guiding his student.

Even so, he did not have any regrets. Moreover, joining The School of Sword Arts as an official member would not change his destiny. It would at most allow him to enjoy slightly better food and pick up more sword techniques.

Since he knew his own potential, he also knew that it would be highly improbable for him to reach the top as an official member in The School of Sword Arts.

In his life, he would be more than satisfied just to reach Kyle's level of having gone through the first job transition.

Therefore, only by entering the Prefectural Selection, going through the first job transition and afterwards becoming a Knight could he change his destiny, as well as his family's destiny.

While Ogden was still struggling with the comprehension of the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, Fang Xingjian had already raised it to level 1.

Given his supreme talent, although he could not hear Kyle's explanation, he was already capable of picking up the technique in its depth even only through movement observation.

Suppressing the joy he was feeling, Fang Xingjian had to force himself not to practice the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique for

which he had already attained level 1.

[1] Internal assessment by The School of Sword Arts to see if one had the calibre to join as an official/internal students and thus have access to learn more high notch skills.

Chapter 18 Flattery

Over the next few days, Fang Xingjian practiced the basic sword techniques of The School of Sword Arts during the day, and secretly practiced the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique at night. This sword technique was much more difficult than the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, and so Fang Xingjian was learning this technique at a much slower pace.

Kaunitz had once again entered the limelight, this time on the training grounds.

The youngster from the Tresia Clan seemed to be in the limelight regardless of where he went. He would always be accompanied by a group of youngsters, even when he was practicing the Eagle Sword Technique by himself. The youngsters were both males and females who wanted to train with him, as if they were certain that they would improve by learning from him.

And every time Kaunitz stopped to take a break or pause to reflect, people would offer him snacks or refreshments, trying to get close to him.

“Young Master Kaunitz, would you like some water?”

“Young Master Kaunitz, you learn really fast. You must have already reached level 2 of the Eagle Sword Technique, right? As expected of the Tresia Clan’s genius.”

However, even when facing such flattery, Kaunitz did not bother smiling at them. His attitude stayed cool when he looked at the other students’ faces, meanwhile focusing his attention on the sword technique. However, a slight frown betrayed his impatience.

At that moment, Ogden stepped up and, as usual, dismissed the rest of the people. “Alright, alright, stop bothering Kaunitz. You’ll need to depend on yourselves in your training, and to pass the Prefectural Selection.”

Kaunitz nodded and spoke in a commanding tone, “You’re just in time. Show me moves twelve and thirty-three of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.”

Ogden started the demonstration with pleasure. In fact, ever since the other party had arrived, he no longer trained together with Fang Xingjian, but stayed near Kaunitz. He practiced with him daily and had no qualms about sharing all of his experience of training the Eagle Sword Technique and the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

‘This is the heir to the Tresia Clan. As long as I maintain a good relationship with him, won’t the examiners for the Prefectural Selection also see me in a better light? Even if I am not able to pass the Prefectural Selection, if I can land myself a job in the Tresia Clan... No, it’s even better if I can get into Tresia Knight Academy!’

Ogden had the typical commoner’s sly manner of thinking. Pondering these things, he put more effort in swinging the wooden sword in his hand.

Fang Xingjian did not care about Ogden’s flattery. This was reality, and this was how society worked. It was natural for those at the bottom of the ladder to do their best to flatter those above. If he had not gained his extraordinary talent in sword arts, he might have made the same choice as Ogden.

However, he had initially thought that Ogden was an honest and straightforward fellow. It seemed that it was only for show, as he was actually a scheming commoner following his own agenda.

“How can Eldest Martial Brother act like this?” Vivian bit her lips and said, “He was practicing with us before, and he looked so honest.... This... this is too...”

“What is it to you?” Fang Xingjian continued practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, planning to achieve its complete mastery. “We each choose our own paths, even if it’s relying on backdoors to enroll in academies or to pass the Prefectural

Selection. When it comes to practicing martial arts, one can only rely on oneself.

“Attributes, techniques, and specialties don’t lie.”

Vivian turned around to look at Fang Xingjian. She gradually regained her concentration and focused on her sword practice once again.

During the past few days, Fang Xingjian had been making full use of his time, only practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique. He had already reached level 29, and was not too far from reaching level 30.

As he waved the wooden sword in his hand, its afterimages seemed to be connected. Each time the sword slashed, its trembling would split the air, making a sound similar to a grizzly bear’s roar.

It rumbled explosively, as if gunpowder had been lit in the air. Fang Xingjian suddenly felt as if there were a huge tremor in his head. It was as if a thunderbolt had cut across the clear skies, making him see stars.

He was stunned for a moment, and then he felt a tingly numbness spread all over his body, as if he had been struck by lightning. His muscles and bones trembled three consecutive times before he managed to come back to his senses.

Grizzly Bear Sword Technique level 30: an additional 6 points in strength, 6 points in agility, increased toughness for his bones and organs, and a substantial increase in the body’s potential, along with its ability to recover from muscle and bone fatigue.

Fang Xingjian felt as if his body was being continuously soaked in a hot spring. His bones and muscles were trembling in extremely slight movements, massaging and nurturing his body. The trembles also shook away all excess burdens, fully cleansing his body.

To think that level 30 of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique would be nurturing his body at all times, helping him increase his body's potential, strengthening its constitution, and amassing energy!

Now his attributes had changed to:

Name

Fang Xingjian

Age

16

Occupation

Warrior's Squire

Level

9

Strength

20

Agility

24

Reaction

11

Endurance

8

Flexibility

12

His strength was no longer below, but rather above Ogden's and Lambert's.

Fang Xingjian was overjoyed. At that moment, a noise broke out from the training grounds.

“He lost. Lambert lost too.”

“To think that both Eldest Martial Brother Ogden and Second Martial Brother Lambert have lost... This... this...”

“What’s there to be surprised about? This is Tresia’s super genius we are talking about. Kaunitz is too strong. He’s only been learning the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique for such a short time! We’ll never be able to catch up with this kind of talent in our whole lives.”

Kaunitz looked at the fallen Lambert as he shook his head and said, “Your attributes are too low, and you are unable to fully express the profoundness of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique. There’s no benefit from training with you.”

Ogden, who was at the side, smiled as if he did not care about his loss at all. He took a look at the pale-faced Lambert and said, “After all, we are only mediocre in talent and we aren’t able to compare with a genius swordsman like you, Kaunitz. One day of your practice is equivalent to a few years’ worth of our training.”

Lambert’s chest heaved a few times, as if he had harsh words to say, but nevertheless, he did not speak up. Eventually, he picked up his sword and dashed out with a flushed face. He was obviously too embarrassed to stay there.

Kaunitz shook his head again, “Practicing the sword requires one to be bold, hardworking, and relentless. How are you going to learn if you can’t even put up with such minor humiliation?”

Saying that, he turned to look in Fang Xingjian’s direction, asking, “I heard that there’s another genius in The School of Sword Arts, who managed to pick up the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique on the first day?”

Ogden nodded and said, “That’s right. The teacher said that his foundation was very sturdy, and that he had already fully mastered a set of basic sword techniques. That was why he could easily pick up the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.”

“A good foundation?” Kaunitz walked up to Fang Xingjian, saying, “I need a person to pair up with me and practice the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique together, breaking it down in stances. You can give it a go.” From his tone, it was as if he took the other party’s agreement for granted, making it sound as if this was actually an act of charity.

“Not interested.” Fang Xingjian did not even turn his head around as he switched to practicing the Eagle Sword Technique. He had perfected the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique up to level 30, and his next goal was to fully master the Eagle Sword Technique. He had no interest in exchanging blows with Kaunitz, nor was he interested in helping him.

Chapter 19 Countering Every Encountered Move

Kaunitz furrowed his brows. He had never thought that a dirty-looking commoner would actually refuse him.

He could not be bothered to say anything else, and merely brandished the wooden sword in his hands. Imbued with a mighty force, the wooden sword was akin to the swipe of a bear's paws.

Fang Xingjian furrowed his brows, turned his body around landed his sword directly on the edge of his opponent's, and felt an intense vibration coming from his opponent's sword. The strength of its force was similar to a gigantic elephant ramming into him, almost making the sword fly out of his hands, which in turn made him involuntarily take three steps back one after the other, before the force of that counterstrike finally dissipated.

Through this collision only, Fang Xingjian understood that Kaunitz was very close to comprehending the essence of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique. His reputation as a genius was well deserved, indeed.

In reality, Kaunitz's strength and speed had already passed the 30 point mark, and had most definitely surpassed Fang Xingjian's. Were it not for the fact that his skill in the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique was not as good as Fang Xingjian's, the latter would have surely been defeated by this single strike.

Kaunitz did not stop there. After forcing his opponent into a retreat with one strike only, he continued his movements and took another step forward. With the longsword he held in his hands, Kaunitz, like a ferocious grizzly bear, slashed down with a mighty pressure, actually splitting the void open. Sounds resembling wind and thunder resounded, as if a huge steel hammer had frenziedly slammed downwards.

Both of Kaunitz's strikes had been executed through the Grizzly Bear Technique's method of strength exertion. Different from ordinary sword techniques, which generally focused on swiftness and weightlessness, this particular technique was akin to a real grizzly bear tearing apart everything around it with its barbaric strength.

Under Kaunitz's continuous attacks, Fang Xingjian, who had experienced a huge change in his life and did not have such a nice character anymore, pierced forward in retaliation with a slight wave of his sword, creating tens of black sword shadows.

When Fang Xingjian displayed his level 30 Grizzly Sword Technique this time around, its inherent power was equivalent to that of a sleeping bear rudely awakened from its hibernation. Widely opening its bloody maw, the attack madly bit towards Kaunitz. This was no longer a simple body tempering technique, but a technique created with the sole purpose of extermination.

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

The two individuals' swords continually clashed against each other, thunderous sounds of collision ringing out and turning into a cacophony of sounds, as if an explosion had lit up midair.

Kaunitz could clearly feel that his speed was above his opponents', but every time he pierced out with his sword, his opponent was able to instantly break the variations in his technique. And regardless of any moves he executed, Fang Xingjian seemed to be able to counter the technique, making Kaunitz feel extremely depressed. He had the strength, but was unable to fully utilize it.

The next moment, Fang Xingjian's sword shadows transformed again, as his sword strikes turned increasingly ferocious. And just when Kaunitz wanted to execute his move, his opponent had already countered it, before he had even started! This meant that Fang Xingjian's understanding of the Grizzly Bear technique far

surpassed his.

On the other hand, Fang Xingjian seemed to be extremely relaxed. Although his opponent's speed was a tier higher than his, simply based on the movements of Kaunitz's shoulders, hands and fingers, Fang Xingjian could already tell which strike Kaunitz was going to unleash. He was simply too familiar with the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, and could easily counter his opponent's strikes with the slightest lift of his finger, even adding a swift attack inside his counter, as an extra.

Each and every time their swords collided, Kaunitz could feel his opponent's superb control. This was the reason why he wanted to exchange blows with Fang Xingjian, in order to gain experience and to learn methods of exerting strength through experiencing others' control over the technique.

Fang Xingjian could also feel that, although they had barely exchanged a few strikes, Kaunitz was already improving. It was no wonder he was called a sword genius.

As slashing sounds rang out, the longsword in Fang Xingjian's hand was like a tank, smashing straight ahead. It rendered Kaunitz's sword strikes useless, deflecting his sword, and pierced towards Kaunitz's chest.

‘I’ve won.’

And just as this thought flashed through Fang Xingjian's mind, embers of rage started flickering in the depths of Kaunitz's eyes. His fingers continually flicked out, each of his muscles and bones emitting sounds like metallic screeches. His palms, initially void of strength, suddenly managed to take control over his sword hilt once more.

As the sound of an explosive blast rang out, this time around, Kaunitz blocked Fang Xingjian straight on. A moment later, loud booming sounds of moving muscles and bones started coming from his body, the entirety of his muscles swelling up by a size as he

slashed out in Fang Xingjian's direction with no reservations.

Kaunitz seemed to be a towering mountain with this attack, his sword slashes resembling a river's reverse flow fueled by the mountain's power. Upon blocking with his sword, Fang Xingjian discovered that the overwhelming force condensed into his opponent's strike was similar to the pressure caused by a mountain crashing down. He gave a stuffy groan and swiftly retreated.

Kaunitz had switched to another sword technique, one which he was proficient in. This went to show that he was not willing to lose.

The sword technique which he was executing now was precisely Tresia Knight Academy's nurturing sword technique, Chaotic Strike. This set of sword techniques emphasized training the power and explosive strength of one's muscles and bones.

Kaunitz had long completed training the Chaotic Strike, having reached level 12. His execution of the technique was akin to a titan continuously smashing down on an entire mountain range.

To have achieved such an outstanding accomplishment of cultivating this sword technique to level 12 was also something Kaunitz was very proud of.

On the other side, Fang Xingjian could not see any flaws to exploit for the moment, and thus was completely overwhelmed by Kaunitz's strength and agility, which were better than his in the first place.

Bangbangbangbang, Fang Xingjian received five to six consecutive blows, and felt his Qi and blood surging wildly in his body, as his hands turned numb. It seemed as though the longsword would fall out of his hands at any moment.

This time around, Kaunitz's attributes had been fully unleashed, completely unlike the time when he was using the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, and had been sorely suppressed. In but an

instant, he managed to put an enormous amount of pressure over Fang Xingjian.

‘This fellow... His agility and flexibility should both be above 30 points.’

Fang Xingjian felt that each time he parried was as though he was being shot at by a cannon. Kaunitz was using this unfamiliar sword art along with the advantage of his higher stats to fully suppress him.

This was what ‘using strength to suppress people’ truly meant.

After three continuous heavy strikes, the force of each sword blow got increasingly strong, giving Fang Xingjian no chance to retaliate. Finally, with a thunderous sound, the wooden sword in Fang Xingjian’s hand was split into two, its halves falling on the ground.

Ogden immediately walked forward, saying, “What a powerful sword technique! Is Young Master Kaunitz displaying the sword technique which is only passed down to the direct heir of the Tresia Knight Academy? It felt many times more powerful when compared to our Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

This sword technique has such a powerful aura that I feel as though the explosiveness of its strength surpasses that of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.”

The students nearby all came up to Kaunitz, fawning over him, but he himself wore an unhappy expression on his face. He had lost in the duel of the Grizzly Bear Technique and had been forced to resort to the other sword techniques he was proficient in. To a genius like himself, this was equivalent to a loss.

With a cold snort, he turned around and left. He decided to cultivate for a few more days and come back to challenge Fang Xingjian only after his Grizzly Bear Sword Technique levelled up more.

Vivian ran to Fang Xingjian and nervously asked, “Martial Brother Xingjian, are you okay?”

Fang Xingjian rubbed his numb arms, but did not answer her. His attention was fully focused on the Techniques Column of the Stats Window. He was not sure when, but a new technique had appeared.

Chaotic Strike (5%)

‘Chaotic Strike? Isn’t this... the technique which Kaunitz used earlier?’ An astonished light flickered in Fang Xingjian’s eyes. ‘My talent is actually powerful to the extent that I’m able to learn my opponent’s sword techniques by merely sparring against him?’

Initially, he was slightly depressed because he had not been able to learn the other sword techniques of The School of Sword Arts, but now he was excited. As for his loss to Kaunitz, he did not pay it any heed at all.

Casually, he took a hold of Vivian’s longsword, and called out in the direction of the departing Kaunitz, “Hey, let’s have one more round!”

Kaunitz turned his head around, and gazed expressionlessly at Fang Xingjian. In reality, he felt that Fang Xingjian’s Grizzly Bear Sword Technique had already surpassed Ogden’s. If he was able to spar with Fang Xingjian, he would naturally progress faster.

Kaunitz had been born with the specialty Force Sense. Such a situation where one was born equipped with a specialty was also known as having an inborn specialty, which was a strong indicator that the person in question was a genius.

Kaunitz’s Force Sense was many times clearer compared to ordinary humans’ when it came to sensing the fluctuations and changes in the degree of the opponents’ strength. This was why he loved to spar with experts. It allowed him to gain experience faster.

At the same time, although he was not able to win against Fang Xingjian by using only the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, he also hated those who refused to admit defeat. This was why he had thought of challenging Fang Xingjian again in a few days' time.

But now, Fang Xingjian had actually dared to initiate a challenge against him. A cold smile hung on his lips as he replied, "Of course. Since you're looking to be abused, I will comply with your wish to the very end."

Chapter 20 Silver Moon

With that, the two engaged in battle again. While they exchanged blows using the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, Fang Xingjian still managed to gain the upper hand very quickly even if he was suppressed in terms of attributes, since he had achieved level 30 in the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique. This forced his opponent to give up on using the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique and to switch to another set of sword techniques.

However, this sword technique was completely different from the Chaotic Strike he had previously used. Once set into motion, Kaunitz's right hand turned into illusions, and the muscles on his hand trembled at an unbelievable speed. This was accompanied by an overflowing sword light, as if mercury had leaked on the earth. He thrust towards Fang Xingjian, and it was like the sun, leaving no openings and no corners untouched.

Fang Xingjian gave a cold snort as he was pushed out of the circle. His top was shredded and he was covered in wounds all over, looking extremely disheveled.

The Grizzly Bear Sword Technique was after all a basic sword technique used for training. A technique used for training the body would not have strong offensive prowess.

“He's just overestimating his own abilities. Who does he think he is? To think that he would dare challenge Kaunitz.”

“There's no helping it. The gap between them is too large. Once Kaunitz stops using the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, Fang Xingjian can no longer face him on equal footing.”

Having defeated his opponent yet again, Kaunitz looked at Fang Xingjian with an amused gaze and asked, “What, you want another round?”

Fang Xingjian saw that another technique had appeared in his

Techniques Column, namely the Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique (6%). A surging will to fight shone in his eyes.

Just like this, Fang Xingjian repeatedly charged forth, continuously suppressing the other party with the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, only to be repeatedly defeated by his opponent's Tresia Academy sword technique.

He was completely covered in dust and traces of blood. When the other students saw his sorry state, their eyes filled with mockery and sarcasm.

“Is this guy an idiot?”

“Hmph, he is really overestimating his own abilities. Does he think that he can win like this?”

Ogden could also not bear to see anymore of this and spoke out, “This persistence is useless. Enough is enough, Fang Xingjian, don't bring embarrassment to The School of Sword Arts.”

Vivian's expression was somewhat unsightly too. She had not expected that there would be such a huge gap between Fang Xingjian and Kaunitz. She looked at Fang Xingjian during the fight and then glanced at Kaunitz, pondering to herself.

“Shut up!” Kaunitz bellowed softly, immediately suppressing the surrounding voices. “Can't you see that I am practicing with Fang Xingjian?”

Kaunitz looked at Fang Xingjian and thought to himself, “This fellow is persevering more and more after I've changed to a different sword technique in each round. Hmph, he really is talented.

And when I practice the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique with him, I also gain experience more easily.”

The corners of his lips curled up as he asked, “Do you still want to continue?”

Fang Xingjian did not say anything, but drew his sword. He displayed the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, rushing towards and thrusting at Kaunitz.

Seeing their constant fighting and Fang Xingjian's continuous defeats, most of the students felt mockery, contempt, empathy and pity putting themselves in his shoes. After a few minutes, most of them did not continue watching, but went back to their own sword practice.

Vivian, Ogden and some others took a few final glances, complicated gazes flashing in their eyes, then went to the side to practice their sword techniques.

'Stronger. I must become stronger. If not, one day, I will be like Fang Xingjian, who is stepped upon by others. This isn't the future I want.' This was the thoughts that ran through most people's minds.

Therefore, they devoted much more effort to their sword practice, and they practiced even harder than ever before as preparation for the upcoming Prefectural Selection.

They would at most glance a few times at the exchange between Kaunitz and Fang Xingjian in between their breaks. Looking at his figure covered in wounds was like looking at a clown.

Fang Xingjian did not care about this. He only had five years' time. Within these five years, he had to attain power by any possible means. It was not just to pass the Empire's Grand Selection, but to aim for the best results as well.

For example, his first goal was to be the Prefecture Champion, placing first in the Prefectural Selection. In the Empire, the one who emerged on the first place in the Prefectural Selection was known as the Prefectural Champion, first place in the Regional Selection as the Regional Champion, and finally, first place in the National Selection was known as the National Champion.

In the Empire's history, it had been two hundred years since there had last been a person with supreme powers who had won all three titles in a row.

Fang Xingjian had already fought tens of battles against Kaunitz in one and a half hours, being defeated over and over again. But what did it matter? What did some physical injuries, a sixteen-year-old youngster suppressing him and some of the students' contempt matter? All these were nothing when compared to that night's conversation and the seven day long torture. Compared to that, what he was experiencing could not even make an imprint on Fang Xingjian's mind.

After the consecutive battles, Kaunitz could not help but gasp for breath, despite his stamina.

On the other hand, Fang Xingjian was so exhausted that he was half-kneeling down on the ground, not moving an inch.

Compared to their usual practice, this method of sparring required one to exert all their body's energy in an instant. Therefore, they depleted their energy and stamina much faster than usual.

However, Fang Xingjian felt that everything had been worthwhile. He saw his Stats Window change, now displaying Chaotic Strike (42%), Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique (32%), Descent of Holy Light (30%), and Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique (12%). He could not suppress the excitement in his heart.

He exhaled a deep breath, looked at Kaunitz, and said, "Let's stop here for today. We'll continue tomorrow."

"Hmph." Kaunitz gave a cold snort before he turned around to continue practicing the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

Not long after, Fang Xingjian had had enough rest, so he continued practicing the Eagle Sword Technique.

Over the next few days, Fang Xingjian became increasingly busy. In the morning and evening he had to help out with work at The School of Sword Arts. He had to spend time practicing the Eagle Sword Technique, and even to spar with Kaunitz. Although he constantly lost to his opponent, he was also secretly acquiring Tresia's sword techniques.

Fang Xingjian also realized that the higher the experience percentages grew, the slower the speed at which he managed to secretly steal the skills.

It was actually a very simple idea. Although he was very talented, he was restricted by his current level, which was insufficient to make up for his lack of sword technique knowledge. He had never seen the Chaotic Strike before that time, so it was obvious that he could only learn a move at a time, each time he witnessed the technique.

Still, as the number of moves he learnt increased, and those which he had not yet learned decreased, Fang Xingjian's progress stagnated if Kaunitz did not display the moves which he had not yet seen.

Half a month's time passed by. His Eagle Sword Technique progressed significantly, and after reaching level 30, it had given him the effects of 3 additional points in agility, 3 in reaction, 3 in endurance, and 3 in flexibility.

This changed his attributes to: strength 20, agility 27, reaction 14, endurance 11, and flexibility 15.

With this increase, his strength and agility attributes had grown slightly closer to Kaunitz's. Coupled with the fact that he was becoming increasingly familiar with his opponent's sword techniques, he could persevere for a longer period of time, which forced Kaunitz to continue displaying new sword techniques, which in turn allowed Fang Xingjian to acquire them.

Even if Fang Xingjian wanted to defeat his opponent, there was

still quite a bit of a difference between their abilities. It was already hard enough to compensate for the gap between their attributes alone.

Of course, if he had displayed a level 30 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique from the very beginning, Fang Xingjian could have instantly defeated his opponent's low-leveled Grizzly Bear Sword Technique. However, in order to secretly acquire the sword techniques, he would obviously not do such a thing. Instead, he allowed sufficient time for his opponent to change to another set of sword techniques, and to reveal his actual abilities.

‘The few sword techniques which Kaunitz has displayed are all on the same standard as the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique. They all seem to be tapping into the organs’ strength. Moreover, his attributes were all higher than mine to begin with. That’s why he’s be able to fully suppress me once he displays his own techniques.’

Kaunitz had practiced the sword for ten years, inheriting the Tresia Clan’s Sword Technique, which had been passed down for hundreds of years. Of course, the endless medicine, supplements and tonics had not been for nothing either.

‘My training has still been too short.’

However, it was too bad that the difficulty of the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique was actually much higher than the other sword techniques. After all the practice Fang Xingjian had done, he had only been able to reach level 8. Although he could feel his organs contracting slightly, it had not reached the level where his attributes would increase.

Of course, Kaunitz only thought that his opponent was very talented, and could quickly adapt to the techniques he used. Kaunitz could not have thought that his opponent would be able to grasp the way in which he channelled his energy, and to gradually learn the whole set of sword techniques simply by observing and

coming in contact with it. He was only thinking that the amount of time required to defeat his opponent had gotten increasingly longer, and that there had been many times where he'd had to display new sword techniques.

After all, even with his specialty 'Force Sense', he would still be required to understand the profoundness behind the sword technique before he could truly acquire his opponent's sword techniques.

However, given Fang Xingjian's repeated losses, his popularity in The School of Sword Arts plunged as well. There was almost no one who was willing to practice with him, and everyone avoided him like a plague. Despite his very obvious progress and the times when he could put up a fight against Kaunitz's full prowess for some time, the result was still the same.

That was because in their eyes, Fang Xingjian had already become Kaunitz's daily punching bag. Who would dare to approach him? Were they not afraid of Tresia Clan's power and influence? Fang Xingjian's talent had been extremely low when compared to the Tresia Clan's influence.

That day, when Fang Xingjian entered the training grounds, he saw the typical gazes of detest, contempt, and mockery from the people around him. Looking at how they had avoided him, Fang Xingjian did not show any reactions, but merely started to practice his Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique by himself.

His next goal was to perfect this sword technique by reaching its maximum level.

The surrounding people glanced at him a few times, and then went back to their own affairs. Time passed by very quickly, and only four months remained until the Prefectural Selection. The other students devoted even more effort to their sword practice, hoping to reach a breakthrough before the start of the Prefectural

Selection.

Lambert glanced at Fang Xingjian, who was quietly practicing. From the day he had been defeated and humiliated by Kaunitz, he had started keeping a low profile. Seeing Fang Xingjian like this, he silently nodded to himself.

‘Don’t collapse. These rubbish people around here are all blind.

‘To be able to withstand Kaunitz’s pressure and yet able to improve daily by leaps and bounds....

‘You are the real genius.’

Silence filled the training grounds, leaving only the rustling sounds of people going through sword practice.

Fang Xingjian gave a cold snort as he was pushed out of the circle. His top was shredded and he was covered in wounds all over, looking extremely disheveled.

Chapter 21 Technique Theft

At daybreak, there were many youngsters already practicing diligently on the training grounds of The School of Sword Arts.

Ogden was still trying to grasp and learn the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique.

Lambert relentlessly practiced the Eagle Sword Technique, hoping to raise this last basic sword technique to the maximum level before the Prefectural Selection.

Fang Xingjian had just finished handling some of the school's minor affairs, and he had started practicing the Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique. This sword technique was mandatory for all the soldiers of the Empire. It was succinct, yet broad and profound, focusing especially on the training of the joints and ligaments, which allowed him to greatly increase his speed in changing stances.

No one spoke, and no one was taking breaks. In the cold weather, there was only steaming sweat rising from the students' bodies.

There were those who carried vengeance, those who carried their dreams, and even those under the responsibility of their whole families. Everyone was moving towards their goals.

Suddenly, The School of Sword Arts' door was pushed open as Kaunitz and Vivian came in together. Seeing how the two of them were talking and laughing happily, Ogden's eyes stared in surprise. He could not believe that this was the same Kaunitz as before, always sarcastic, always looking down in contempt at the rest of the world.

Vivian had changed into a light blue one-piece dress. Coupled with her youthful pretty face, it gave her a different aura, making her seem more beautiful than usual.

Lambert gave a cold snort as his gaze towards Vivian turned into

one of contempt.

During the past few days, while Vivian had tried getting closer to Kaunitz, Fang Xingjian had not felt the slightest thing concerning her increasing coolness towards him. He did not know whether it was because he was overly rational, or if it was because the purple flames had robbed him of his feelings of love, friendship and kinship.

Either way, he had already given Vivian pointers on her swordsmanship, thus repaying her for the meal before. As for which path she would choose to take thereafter, it was of no concern to him.

However, seeing that Kaunitz had arrived, he could not wait. He pointed with his sword and said, "Let's begin."

Kaunitz gave a lofty smile and asked, "Have you not received enough beatings?"

The next moment, the two figures passed each other like lightning and clashed once again.

It was a familiar rhythm, but with the practice from the past few days, Kaunitz's Grizzly Bear Sword Technique had also improved greatly. It had reached level 2, and thus he was able to fend off Fang Xingjian's attacks for longer than before. However, once he showed signs of losing, he would quickly switch to his other sword techniques in a bid to overturn the situation.

He used a sword technique which released a series of holy light rays, as if divine light had fallen from the heavens. It borrowed strength from the spine vertebrae, as well as from the shoulders and back, as if Kaunitz had grown a set of wings. With each contraction and explosion from his back and heart, Kaunitz dashed about, surrounding Fang Xingjian, restricting him to the point of making him unable to do anything but receive attacks and rendering him unable to fight back.

This Descent of Holy Light was used by the Tresia Knight Academy to train the strength output of the back and legs in particular, increasing the practitioner's speed. When Kaunitz performed the technique, he created a series of illusions which drew cheers from the crowd.

The four sets of sword techniques which Kaunitz had been using against Fang Xingjian were all of the same standard as the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique. All of them were strong techniques which combined both internal and external strength, at the same time borrowing the organs' strength. These, coupled with the fact that his attributes were much higher than Fang Xingjian's, were the reasons why he was able to achieve full suppression over his opponent.

Seeing how Fang Xingjian was having trouble keeping up and how his sword was eventually sent flying, Vivian frowned and wanted to ask Kaunitz to show some mercy.

However, thinking of how Kaunitz had just started to take a liking to her, she swallowed it down, a hint of pity in her gaze towards Fang Xingjian.

She had initially thought that Fang Xingjian was already a genius in sword arts, with a great future awaiting him. However, when Fang Xingjian was put next to Kaunitz, he paled in comparison.

Kaunitz's looks, talent, blood lineage, clan and background all far exceeded those of Fang Xingjian. The latter's supposed talent had become insignificant in front of Kaunitz's abilities.

Over the past ten days in particular, Fang Xingjian had repeatedly challenged Kaunitz, but had been unable to defeat him. It made her even more disappointed in Fang Xingjian.

After chatting with Kaunitz, she had realized how narrow her perspective had previously been. There was a wider world out there, across the Empire and across the land. There were all sorts of renowned clans and factions which had a history of hundreds or

even thousands of years. Everything was far beyond what she could imagine.

Fang Xingjian picked up the sword, and he looked at the progression of the Descent of Holy Light, smiling with satisfaction in his heart. However, he did not allow his pride to reflect on his face. Instead, he merely took a deep breath and said, "Again."

However, Kaunitz did not continue the fight, but he peered over the people in the training grounds, who were sneaking peeks at them or laughing softly in contempt. Although most of them were targeted at Fang Xingjian, for some reason he could not define, he felt displeased.

Kaunitz suddenly said, "A bunch of annoying flies."

He looked at Fang Xingjian and said, "Let's move to the forest in the back."

There was a small forest in the backyard of The School of Sword Arts. Usually, the students who wished to have some peace and quiet would train there.

Fang Xingjian was, of course, indifferent. He nodded, heading for the forest together with Kaunitz. Vivian wanted to go as well, but was stopped by Kaunitz. "I wish to practice in a quieter environment. I'll be able to focus better."

Thus, the two opponents continued their duel in the forest. Having no more spectators, Kaunitz was able to better display his abilities. Along with a few yells, the sword in his hand moved increasingly quicker. Sometimes, even when he was close to losing, he did not switch to the other sword techniques, but instead focused on displaying the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

Despite almost losing to Fang Xingjian's Grizzly Bear Sword Technique a few consecutive times, he merely laughed loudly and became even more excited. He felt that he was able to progress much faster this way.

However, Fang Xingjian was not there to help the other party train. Seeing that his opponent was less and less concerned with victory and did not seem to be using much of his other techniques, he could not help but provoke him, having no onlookers around.

In three consecutive attacks, he sent the sword in his opponent's hand flying. He put his sword at Kaunitz's neck as he laughed and said, "You sissy, if not for the fact that you were born in a better environment, how could you possibly be my opponent? You are merely a genius created by Tresia Clan's resources."

Fury flickered in Kaunitz's eyes. "You're looking for a beating."

Antagonized, Kaunitz kicked the sword lying on the ground up into his hand. With a series of quick Chaotic Strike attacks, he pushed Fang Xingjian back until the latter was almost unable to catch his breath.

'That's the way!' Fang Xingjian bellowed in his heart, displaying the full prowess of a level 30 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, as if he himself was a crazy grizzly bear. He clashed fiercely with Kaunitz, each of his attacks with the power to send a strong man flying.

Along with the improvement of Fang Xingjian's sword techniques and stamina, the time for which the two of them battled daily kept increasing, from two hours to three, four, or even five occasionally.

Time passed by as they fought. On the training grounds, there were many people who could not take the loneliness. There were those who had gone for an early rest, as well as those who had given up, feeling that they would not be able to reach a breakthrough, since there was not much time left.

There were also those who bore with the loneliness and boredom, as they grew stronger and stronger from their relentless daily training.

Chapter 22 In Secret

After a month, Fang Xingjian's Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique had long since maxed out at level 30. His Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique had also reached the maximum level of 20.

At the same time, his endurance attribute had slightly increased from the crazy daily battling. After all, his endurance was weak to begin with, so when it increased it would improve at a faster pace than other people's. Reaching level 30 of the Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique increased the following attributes: 1 point in agility, 4 points in reaction, and 4 points in flexibility. It also allowed him to perform various maneuvers which tested the limits of the human body, just like that of a gymnast.

And because of the large increase in flexibility, he encountered fewer errors in his movements, greatly increasing the stability of his strength exertion and accuracy.

As for level 20 of the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, it brought him a crazy 5 point increase in strength, 5 points in agility, 4 points in endurance, plus 4 points in flexibility. Moreover, because his organs were all compressed, the explosive energy of his body had been raised significantly. His immunity, physique, and resistance against attacks had all greatly increased.

Thus, his attributes had become:

Name Fang Xingjian

Age 16

Occupation Warrior's Squire

Level 9

Strength 25

Agility 33

Reaction 18

Endurance 16

Flexibility 23

Now he would not tire even after battling for five hours. Each of his punches could blast a hole in the wall in a quick short burst, at a speed comparable to that of a car, as if he were a human tank.

While Fang Xingjian lost out to his opponent in terms of strength, his speed was already a notch higher than Kaunitz's. In addition, with his level 30 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, he could already make the most of Kaunitz's mistakes on occasion, thus defeating his opponent even when he displayed different higher quality sword techniques.

After all, the difference in abilities between the two of them was much less now. And even if the chances of them winning were currently 70 to 30, if they were to go all out, they would each win some and lose some, unlike the one-sided situation of their current battles.

However, in order to trick his opponent to display Tresia Academy's sword techniques, Fang Xingjian kept the rhythm steady rather than defeating his opponent right away. He blocked the techniques his opponent had displayed before in their battles, and only when a new move was showed up would he pretend to lose.

With his talent in the sword arts, switching between the stances and circulating the strength in each of his attacks was all very natural to him. It was an easy feat to deceive someone like Kaunitz, who was not even a knight, nor was he experienced.

Even if Kaunitz felt suspicious at times, all Fang Xingjian had to do was provoke him.

After all this time, he was now able to discern that while Kaunitz

seemed cold and haughty, he was only a sixteen-year-old youngster after all. While his sword skills were exemplary, he was very simple-minded. Most of his life this far had been devoted to sword arts.

However, after a month of consecutive losses, Fang Xingjian no longer planned to lose that day. After finishing the The School of Sword Arts' chores in the morning, he immediately left the training grounds.

There was no other reason apart from having already learnt Chaotic Strike, Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique, Descent of the Holy Light, and the Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique, all of which Kaunitz had fully displayed.

Although Kaunitz may have known other sword techniques, he had never shown them. Making countless attempts to lure him in, Fang Xingjian eventually realized that the strongest sword techniques Kaunitz knew were these four, which meant that he would not attempt to defeat Fang Xingjian with sword techniques of the same standard as the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

The nurturing techniques for external training were generally more basic than the nurturing techniques for internal training, which were of a higher standard. Therefore, the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique was above the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, and the Chaotic Strike was of a higher standard than the Eagle Sword Technique. All factions were aware of this theory.

Therefore, Fang Xingjian no longer planned to practice on the training grounds, since he could not show others the sword techniques which he planned on practicing.

‘Three more months until the Prefectural Selection.

‘As long as I obtain a Knight's official status, I will be able to seize even more resources for my training.

‘When that time comes, even if I reveal my abilities to a greater

extent, others will not be able to deal with me that easily because of the official status.'

Seeing Fang Xingjian leave after having breakfast, disappointment appeared on Second Martial Brother Lambert's face.

'Has he given up already? That's true... After losing consecutively for so many days, even the strongest person would feel discouraged.

'I must definitely not be like this.'

For the past few days, Ogden's face had been filled with confidence. That was because he had successfully learned the first level of the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, and had finally comprehended its profoundness.

Practicing the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique had already made his internal organs grow stronger.

'Excellent, there's three more months. As long as I manage to reach level 2 in the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, I will have a higher chance at the Prefectural Selection.'

Thinking about this, Ogden's aura changed yet again, a cloud of color filling his face.

Vivian practiced alongside Kaunitz. Given Fang Xingjian's departure, today was the first day she was using the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique to practice with Kaunitz.

However, she had merely joined The School of Sword Arts a couple of years before, and her Grizzly Bear Sword Technique was only at level 5. Because of her current understanding of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, Kaunitz would always defeat her in a couple of moves.

After all, Kaunitz's attributes were much higher than Vivian's. Both his strength and agility were around 30, while Vivian's were around 15 at most. Like a child against an adult, no matter what

move she made, it was proven useless.

In the end, Kaunitz could only carefully control his speed and agility, doing his best to stay at Vivian's level in order to have the semblance of an exchange.

"Let's take a break."

Kaunitz sighed. Looking at the weak and bashful Vivian, he could not bear to say any harsh words.

Vivian had a pitiful look on her face, "Sor... Sorry, Brother Kaunitz, my skills are too lacking."

"It's alright. I'll give you guidance in the afternoon." Then, Kaunitz asked, "Right, do you know where Fang Xingjian went? It's not easy to find such a good target."

Vivian shook her head innocently, replying, "I don't know. I don't know him very well. However, since you've defeated him so many days in a row, he probably got scared of you?"

"Scared? He didn't seem like it." Kaunitz sighed, "Was I too harsh yesterday?"

After Fang Xingjian left The School of Sword Arts he went straight to the commoner district a few streets away. He went to a corner and leapt upwards. When he was midair, his foot tapped on the wall, and he instantly reached its top. Then, supporting himself with one arm, he jumped over the two-meter-high wall.

With his current physical attributes, such a thing was only too easy for him.

He raised his head and saw a burnt collapsed house filled with all sorts of rubbish. It was a house which had burnt down when a fire had broken out in the commoner district the previous year. All twelve people in it had burned to death in their sleep.

Not only did the government not care about this case, even the people in the vicinity treated it as a rubbish dump, since their

death states were too horrible and because the house had burnt down completely. Moreover, no one would concern themselves with such a secluded commoner district. No one would go there.

Such a secluded place was just right for Fang Xingjian's sword practice.

In fact, the moment when he realized that he was able to secretly learn Kaunitz's sword techniques, he had already started keeping an eye out for such a secluded and abandoned corner, so that he would be able to practice the sword arts he had secretly acquired.

Holding the sword given to him by the old man from the fishing village, Fang Xingjian started to practice the Tresia Knight Academy's sword techniques one by one.

The Chaotic Strike was first.

Chapter 23 The Last Three Months

The sword technique Chaotic Strike had been created by a wise senior when he was observing the peak of a towering mountain.

One important point of this sword technique was to be able to visualize the majesty and grandeur of mountains, each move and each attack having to be as heavy as a mountain.

While it sounded very mysterious, it actually meant that one had to use changes to the mind to bring about changes to the blood.

For example, when a person climbed up the mountain's peak and looked down at the other mountains and streams at their feet, that person would naturally feel broad-minded. Or when one stood by the seaside, looking at the endless sea, one would naturally feel relaxed and at peace.

Almost all sword techniques created after their inventors' close observation of nature were like this. Through observing nature one could comprehend the concept within and then apply it in such a way that it would change the state within the human body.

Just like how a person's blood pressure would rise when getting angry, or when feeling scared or nervous.

When a person was happy and relaxed, the vessels would also be relaxed. Even the burden on the organs would be lightened.

This was the theory behind the mental state affecting the physical state.

As for Chaotic Strike, it carried the concept of the majesty of mountains, coupled with moves which twisted the muscles and bones in order to massage the organs and nurture them. The most important organ to train was the heart.

The final goal was to strengthen the heart, allowing the blood flow to be as stable as a mountain, strengthening the blood's ability to supply nutrition, changing the physique and increasing

physical strength.

While Fang Xingjian did not fully understand the principle within the technique, he had acquired the whole process from Kaunitz. Moreover, since Kaunitz had outstanding talent to begin with, he had made no errors with the level 12 Chaotic Strike, making Fang Xingjian's learning process more smooth.

Fang Xingjian had relied on his supernatural talent to pick up this set of sword technique. But even so, he was still being very careful, since the process relied on the mental state's ability to affect the human body from within.

The human body was extremely complicated, and a person's mental state would change very quickly. Moreover, it dealt with important elements, such as the blood and the heart. Therefore, not even the slightest bit of carelessness was allowed.

Fang Xingjian's motions were slow, similar to those of an old man's. He thrust outwards with each sword stance only by half or one-third of the actual requirement, then stopping to carefully analyze and experience it over and over again.

It could be said that this was the slowest speed at which he had ever practiced.

'The technique in this Chaotic Strike is even harder than that of the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique. Moreover, I do not have a teacher to instruct me by my side. If I make the wrong move, it may cause my blood vessels to burst and organs to deteriorate.'

But luckily, Fang Xingjian's talent was excellent. He slowly analyzed Chaotic Strike's stances and soon got a general grasp of them after a few days. After ten days or so, he was already capable of practicing it smoothly.

If Tresia's sword arts teacher ever saw this, he would be so shocked that his eyeballs would pop out!

Just like this, Fang Xingjian would head to The School of Sword

Arts once in the morning and once in the afternoon to deal with some chores and to have his meal, spending the rest of his time at the abandoned ruins, practicing his sword techniques.

Seeing how Fang Xingjian headed out to practice daily, the people from The School of Sword Arts were initially full of contempt, then gradually stopped caring. After two months, they had gotten used to Fang Xingjian's actions.

Ogden had told Fang Xingjian that it was useless to avoid Kaunitz like this, advising him to apologise instead.

Lambert had asked Fang Xingjian if he needed help.

Vivian had not spoken another word to Fang Xingjian. She acted like a proud peacock, constantly accompanying Kaunitz and displaying her charms.

Kyle had also spoken to Fang Xingjian about this.

"I heard that you and Kaunitz have had some disagreements? Do you need me to step in to mediate? No matter how powerful the Tresia Clan is, Kaunitz would have to show me some respect."

Fang Xingjian shook his head and said, "Teacher, there's no need for that. I feel more at ease practicing alone outside."

During this time, Kyle had also arranged for them to register for the Prefectural Selection, and Kaunitz had taken a few of the students to attend Tresia's gathering. Kaunitz now went around together with Vivian, and in the eyes of those attending The School of Sword Arts it was as if they were already a couple.

Even Ogden started being more polite to Vivian when he saw her.

Of course, everyone still spent most of their time in their sword practice. As the Prefectural Selection got closer, the mood on the training grounds also turned more gloomy, as if the air was so tense that one could squeeze water out of it.

Unnoticeably, many warriors also came to the city from the

vicinity in order to take part in the Prefectural Selection.

Just like this, time passed by very quickly. Another three months went by, and the day of the Prefectural Selection finally arrived.

In the abandoned courtyard, Fang Xingjian stopped his movements and exhaled deeply.

Chaotic Strike, Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique, Descent of the Holy Light, and Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique. Each of these sets of sword techniques was extremely profound, and could penetrate the mysteries within the human body. For one with mediocre talent, even with the foundation of other sword techniques, he or she would probably require five or more years in order to fully master each of the techniques to the maximum level.

After all, Kaunitz, a genius living the life of an aristocrat, had received guidance from numerous well-known teachers and had practiced sword arts since young so that he could to attain full mastery of these four techniques by the age of sixteen.

When Fang Xingjian had reached level 10 for the Descent of the Holy Light, he realised that this sword technique's principles slightly overlapped with those of the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, which led to the absence of increases in attributes.

He had also considered whether it would be possible to complement the advantages and disadvantages of two sword techniques. However, even though he had enough talent, he had insufficient experience in sword arts. Therefore, after failing a few attempts, he decided to give up.

From there, he decided to devote all of his energy into training Chaotic Strike, the Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique, and the Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique.

He would only sleep three hours per day, practicing sword techniques not only when he was awake, but sometimes even in his dreams.

At the end of the day, Fang Xingjian would sometimes feel giddiness, other times his body turned limp, and sometimes hateful emotions would arise in his heart.

But when he recalled that night, and recalled those vengeful feelings, he forced himself to calm down and continue with his sword practice.

Counting the time he had left, Fang Xingjian's lifespan only amounted to four and a half years. There was no other way out for him.

And his efforts paid out. One day before the Prefectural Selection, Fang Xingjian finally completed the mission which he had thought impossible. He had fully mastered the three sets of sword techniques, namely Chaotic Strike, the Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique, and the Tresia-Stye Foundation Sword Technique to the maximum level of 20.

Chaotic Strike gave him 4 additional points in strength, 4 points in agility, 8 points in endurance, and 4 points in flexibility.

The Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique gave him 3 additional points in strength, 3 points in agility, 5 points in reaction, 3 points in endurance, and 3 points in flexibility.

He had spent the most effort on the Tresia-Stye Foundation Sword Technique, and had received 2 points in strength, 2 in agility, 2 in reaction, 2 in endurance and 2 in flexibility.

One could tell from these stats that the more his various attributes increased, the stronger his physique became, and the less additional attributes he gained from the sword techniques.

On one hand, it was because the attributes of his body's potential were wasted less and less. On the other hand, it was also because the more his attributes grew, the more difficult it was for him to raise them through training.

Chapter 24 Begin

For the past three months, other than the increase in attributes brought about by the mastery of techniques, Fang Xingjian's fundamental attributes had also been augmented due to the long time he had spent training.

Thus, Fang Xingjian's current attributes were:

Name Fang Xingjian

Age 16

Occupation Warrior's Squire

Level 9

Strength 36

Agility 42

Reaction 23

Endurance 30

Flexibility 32

Techniques:

Single-handed Sword Grab Level 20

Cross-slash Level 20

Grizzly Bear Sword Technique Level 30

Eagle Sword Technique Level 30

Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique Level 30

Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique Level 20

Chaotic Strike Level 20

Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique Level 20

Descent of Holy Light Level 10

Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique Level 20

Specialities: Genius Swordsmanship,
Survival Instinct,
Internal Healing,
Internal Training,
Sword Specialist

He now possessed more than double the strength he'd had three months before, and his speed was now fast enough to leave an afterimage if within a short distance. He was now able to stay energized the entire day with just one or two hours of rest each day, especially given his enhanced physical strength from the development of his internal organs.

At the same time, the fusion of his muscles, bones, blood and organs greatly boosted his flexibility, allowing him to execute various sword techniques with the perfect control over the amount of power.

At this moment, Fang Xingjian gained three additional specialties while practicing his sword techniques for internal strength.

Internal Healing: possesses a certain amount of control over the internal organs; allows one to rouse the muscles and bones using willpower, restricting internal injuries and forcing internal wounds to heal temporarily.

Internal Training: subjective willpower can help the intestines digest and greatly enhances one's absorbing ability, thus increasing the effects of martial arts training and improving food absorption rate.

Out of the first two specialties, one allowed Fang Xingjian to heal his own internal injuries while the other increased the degree of attribute enhancement during martial arts practice.

The other one, Sword Specialist, made Fang Xingjian feel slightly perplexed.

Sword Specialist: increases the accumulated potential from practicing sword arts.

He had attained this specialty after perfecting the tenth sword technique up to the maximum level, but he did not understand its effects, and gave up after researching for a while. Little did he know that it was a specialty Kaunitz had always dreamt of attaining, and for which he had even come to The School of Sword Arts for it, intending to learn the school's basic sword techniques in a bid to obtain it.

The next moment, as Fang Xingjian casually cut through the air, the sword's pitch-black afterimage successfully connected into one, like a cloud of black fog exploding and dispersing into the air. The blade sliced through the air, creating an explosive buzz. The continuously compressed air formed shockwaves which were pushed outwards. They were similar to sword Qi striking against the ground and the walls, at the same time creating light crackling sounds.

Compared with the current Kaunitz, Fang Xingjian realized that he was already able to crush Kaunitz both in terms of attributes and swordsmanship.

This increased his self-confidence for the Prefectural Selection.

Taking a step forward, Fang Xingjian was like an arrow ripping through the air whilst yelling out continuous howls, and arrived at the base of the wall in a second. Thereafter, he took a heavy step with his right leg, making a series of dull sounds, as if the ground had trembled for a moment.

Suddenly, an explosion revealed a small pit the size of a footprint. Amidst the crumbling surface and flying rocks, Fang Xingjian had already flipped across the wall and headed towards the examination area.

As the Prefectural Selection neared, Kirscht gradually started filling with strangers. They were Warriors who had come for the

selections from the neighboring cities, towns, or even villages.

According to the official figures, more than three thousand people were participating in Kirst's Prefectural Selection.

While hurrying all the way to the examination area, Fang Xingjian saw many brave strong Warriors carrying various weapons. Solemnity and nervousness fully shone on their faces, since the following competition could decide the paths that the rest of their lives would take.

The drill grounds in the City Guards Institution were already packed with people. Fang Xingjian queued up at the entrance to verify his identity before he took a number tag and wore it on his wrist.

Fang Xingjian had been casually standing by the side. After a while, his senior in The School of Sword Arts, Ogden, appeared before him. Ogden had already comprehended the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique and had successfully attained level 2 in it. Confidence was written all over his face. His current strength, agility, and reaction attributes had all broken past 20 points. A few juniors who were also participating in the selection followed behind him.

Seeing Fang Xingjian, he could not help but laugh. "Isn't this Junior Xingjian? After hiding for so many months, you're finally out in the sun?"

"Couldn't have been easy training by yourself. Anyway, it's been such a long time. Have you increased your Eagle Sword Technique's level? Do you need some guidance from me?"

"Oh, right. Young Master Kaunitz is also here for the selection. Why don't you go greet him?"

Ogden laughed out loud. To him, the one Fang Xingjian feared the most in The School of Sword Arts would be Kaunitz, who had thrashed him daily.

Fang Xingjian smiled coldly in his heart and threw a glance towards Ogden. Suddenly, he placed his hand on Ogden's chest and pushed him with a little force. It was as if an adult had pushed a young child. Ogden flew backwards and landed with a bang after tumbling away over ten meters.

“You!” Having been pushed over by the other party in one strike, his face had turned a furious red. But then he thought to himself, ‘What happened? How could his strength exceed mine by such a large margin?’

At this moment, a red-haired Knight wearing Knight attire clapped, starting to speak slowly from a podium on the drill grounds. “Everyone is here, let's begin.”

This Knight had strong limbs, a full beard decorated his face, and his red hair flew in the wind like flames.

He had only opened his mouth normally, not even shouting, but the sound waves reached the ends of the arena due to some specific contractions of his lungs. Ogden's expression turned ghastly. He glared at Fang Xingjian fiercely, but did nothing else.

Fang Xingjian did not even look at him, but instead stared fixedly at the red-haired Knight, saying to himself, ‘His internal organs must be extremely condensed, and their strength is equivalent to that of a strong man's arms and thigh muscles.’ He had asked around and had found that the Knight before him was one of the examiners in the selections. He was Hogan, the leader of the City Guards, at level 19. Since he had been able to attain level 19, it was obvious that he had completed his first transition after becoming a Knight.

His abilities were just a step away from reaching the second transition. It was said that he had participated in the Regional Selection before, and had almost become a Conferred Knight, who could attain the right to the Empire's second job transition.

As the red-haired Knight spoke, everyone on the grounds fell

silent.

The Knight nodded, satisfied, and said, “I am Hogan, your examiner for the first round.”

The Empire’s Prefectural Selection was not an easy test. The three areas he was evaluating were namely their physical abilities, their techniques, and their level of comprehension.

The examinees were basically Warriors who had not gone through the first job transition, and there were many participants overall. Therefore, it was not arranged for them to have duels which could easily result in deaths or injuries.

Suppose there were duels between a few thousand people, each of them the elites of various dojos and academies. If there were to be any cases of injuries or death, these could even incite fierce rioting, increase the frequency of armed fights in the city, and cause unrest in the Empire.

Moreover, a single battle would not be sufficient to determine one’s potential and talent.

Hence, the Prefectural Selection removed the battling mode, only including theoretical and practical tests.

Hogan continued. “The Prefectural Selection’s main arena is at Kirst Royal Academy, which is about twelve kilometers away.

“You have ten minutes to get there. All latecomers will be disqualified.

“So, I will be waiting there.”

After saying that, in a flash, Hogan sprinted beyond the drill grounds. The air howled and the earth shook, as if a large group of elephants were running wildly. Each of his steps smashed the ground into pieces, making little pits, while the enormous counterforce propelled his body, allowing him to dash out like a rocket, and even to rip through the air, creating a trail of faint white smoke.

‘What a fast speed!’ Fang Xingjian’s gaze froze. ‘To have such an explosive force, his strength and agility must both be at a minimum of 50. No, they could even be at 60! Or even higher!’

With Hogan’s display of ability, many Warriors on the ground started to move, jostling each other as they headed towards the drill grounds’ exit.

“Everyone, I will make a move first. The Tresia Clan will be accepting the position of this time’s Prefectural Champion.”

With a faint howl, a shadow dashed up high. Kaunitz stepped on the heads of over ten Warriors and dashed out of the drill grounds like a cool breeze.

The City Guards’ Institution was barricaded by tall walls over five meters tall, and the fastest way out was through the main gate.

Kaunitz’s control was brought to its peak. He used the bones and muscles of the bodies in the crowd as a propulsion medium, sprinting to the gate in a flash.

However, just as he was about to leap to the main gate, a fierce gale howled. The turbulence in the air stirred against his face, making it difficult for him to breathe.

“Scram.”

Immediately afterwards, a gigantic shadow loomed over him.

Chapter 25 Charge Through

“Who’s that?”

With a holler, Kaunitz still managed to turn his body whilst in the air, fiercely smashing his tender fist towards the figure.

The other party chuckled and returned the punch straight on. Kaunitz only felt overwhelming strength piercing through his fist into his body, the domineering strength sending him flying.

Bang! With a loud sound, Kaunitz flew over twenty metres away. Half kneeling on the ground, he felt his right arm numb and aching. His vital energy and blood thrashed about in his body, making him unable to exert any strength for quite some time.

He raised his head to take a look, and stared in disbelief at the burly man who had driven him back.

“Robert?”

That burly man laughed, already turning to squeeze through the gates. His height was over 2.5 metres, and his four limbs were strong and thick, much like the supporting pillars of bridges.

There were many big Warriors on the grounds, but standing beside him they looked like little kids.

Wherever this burly man passed by, it was as if a wild boar thrashed through a ploughed field, the crowd being the wheat, easily crushed and pushed aside. With just a few steps, he was the first to dash out of the grounds.

“Hahahaha, the Prefectural Champion this time around can only be me, Robert Abel!”

With a fanatical laughter, he dashed out like a tornado.

“Robert Abel?”

“How is that possible? Isn’t he the leader of the Tyrant Fist Dojo?”

“Hasn’t he already undergone the first transition?”

“This fellow...” Kaunitz gritted his teeth. Eldest Martial Brother Ogden came up to him from the back and asked in concern, “Young Master Kaunitz, are you alright?”

With a cold snort, Kaunitz dashed out once again without bothering to reply. Fury had been ignited in his heart, and without showing any mercy, he advanced like a crazed elephant. Wherever he passed by, the others would be thrown off their feet.

‘Damn it. This fellow Robert... Has he disbanded the Tyrant Fist Dojo?’ Kaunitz thought to himself. ‘If he were to disband the school and go under the Empire’s protection, even if he’s already undergone the first job transition he would still be qualified to participate in the Prefectural Selection.’

Kaunitz was aware that the Tyrant Fist Dojo was merely a third rated school which only passed down the route for the first job transition. As the leader of the school, Robert was merely a level 13 or 14 who had gone through the first job transition.

Usually, he would not give a hoot to such a Warrior with the Knight status. Even if he could not win against the other party, he would be able to fully suppress him with just his background alone.

But they were now in the Prefectural Selection. It was almost impossible to only depend on his own abilities to win over the other party and claim first place.

For a Warrior like Robert who had undergone the first job transition, the goal was the Regional Selection after the Prefectural Selection, namely the path towards the second job transition.

With Robert’s sudden appearance, the atmosphere in the grounds turned increasingly heavy.

Following Kaunitz’s dash out of the grounds, three other figures consecutively knocked off the people around them and dashed out

as well. Tens of people who were at the front cried out as they were grabbed, pushed or sent flying by these three.

The three were one lady and two guys respectively. They also had blonde hair and blue eyes, with similar attitudes to that of Kaunitz.

The lady had a pale face, as if her skin had never seen the sunlight, and her figure was slender and light, similar to the legendary spirits. She closed in on Kaunitz with just a few steps.

As for the two guys behind her, one of them had bronze skin, black hair and was dressed in animal hide, much like a wild man who had come running out of the mountains.

The other one was dressed in a full white suit and wore a spotlessly clean mantle, without a speck of dust. His gaze carried a tinge of despise when he looked at the rest of the people before him.

Amidst the mad rush of the four, a large amount of energy smashed hard into the ground, allowing them to tear through the air like missiles as they chased after Robert.

The lady gave a cold laugh and said, “Haha, seems like the Prefectural Selection this time around will be a competition between our four families and Robert.”

Kaunitz did not pay heed to her words but continued to adjust the rhythm of his breath and muscles, trying to save his physical strength. He was very familiar with this lady and the two guys.

Other than The School of Sword Arts and Kirs Royal Academy, there were four other academies who were on par with Tresia Academy. Together, they were known as the Seven Pearl Academies.

The three people before him were representatives from the other three academies.

The lady who had just spoken was Fei Yang Knights Academy’s representative, Barbara.

The wild man with bronze skin was Shadow Moon Academy's representative, Boris.

Meanwhile, the other guy dressed in white was Ferdinand, a representative of Kirst Aristocrat Academy, a school which had been set up through the collaborative efforts of Kirst's aristocrats.

With their spurt, they reached the exterior of the city in the blink of an eye, falling into second place right after Robert, as they left the rest of the Warriors far behind.

A cool smile broke out on Barbara's pale face when she saw that the three guys were all focusing on the run and that they had ignored her. She continued, "The latest news is that Robert is already at the first transition, level 15. Ignoring his level of comprehension and looking just at attributes and skills alone, he is definitely above us. If we wish to compete to get first and become the Prefectural Champion, it is impossible for us to do it alone."

Shadow Moon Academy's wild man Boris said, "You want to join forces? How do I know if I can place my trust in someone from Fei Yang Knights Academy?"

"Haha." Barbara smiled and said, "Wild man, at least we settle the competition amongst ourselves after dealing with Robert."

"The Prefectural Selection is broken down into three stages which respectively test one's physical strength, one's skills, and the potential of one's comprehension.

"But other than the first stage where everyone is examined altogether, the other two stages are related to the area of training in which one specializes."

There were countless Warriors in the Empire, but when the Empire held the selections, it divided the different factions into five groups.

These were the Sword and Saber, Staff and Rod, Bow and Arrow, Bare-handed and Miscellaneous.

Fei Yang Knights Academy's Barbara further said, "Our academy specializes in archery. Wild man, you specialise in tackling, combat, fist techniques and wrestling, right?"

She looked towards Ferdinand, dressed in white, and continued, "Kirst Aristocrat Academy specializes in the spear arts, right?" The spear arts was, of course, went under the category of Staff and Rod.

"As for Kaunitz, you'll of course go for sword arts.

"Therefore, other than the physical strength in the first stage, we do not have any conflict of interest in the other two stages. So long as we join efforts in order to win against Robert, we will be able to reach the top four.

"As for who will be the first in the Prefectural Selection, this will rely on our respective abilities."

Shadow Moon Academy's Boris was not happy with this, and said, "Robert specializes in the Tyrant Fist. Wouldn't it mean that I'd have to compete with him in the other two stages?"

"Hahahaha." Barbara let out a long laugh and said, "You can only blame it on your bad luck. Although we cannot kill in the Prefectural Selection, if the four of us were to join efforts, it would not be difficult to delay Robert."

Battling was prohibited during the Prefectural Selection, but just as in the case of the collisions and squeezing during the run, so long as there were no injuries, no one would show too much concern about it.

"Do it." Kaunitz said calmly.

The other two exchanged glances and also nodded in agreement.

But while they were discussing, a loud thumping sound drummed crazily in their hearts. A ferocious strength repeatedly tapped against the surface, making the three of them feel as if the surface was trembling.

“Who’s that?”

The four of them turned their heads at the same time and saw a figure dashing towards them, leaving a trail of afterimages behind him. The speed he was moving at was as if he had brought along a hurricane, sending dust and rocks flying. In just an instant, he closed the gap of tens of metres between them and overtook the four. He only left behind blurred shadows, making them unable to react in time, even if they would have wanted to stop him.

Kaunitz stared with his eyes wide open at the person who was turning into a small dot in just an instant. In a low voice he said, “Fang Xingjian?”

The four of them immediately shouted, “After him!”

Chapter 26 Collision

A minute before, just when Kaunitz and the others had dashed out of the grounds, Fang Xingjian had also made his move.

He had tightened the belt holding the sword hung at his waist, squatted slightly, and then sent a burst of energy from the top of his body to the bottom, exploding towards his legs.

With a loud bang! Fang Xingjian's legs seemed to suddenly swell up. The ground under his legs caved in lightly as if it were flour, and he shot into the air like a rocket, flying a distance of over twenty meters over a hundred people.

With another two loud bangs, he had already made two consecutive leaps and was standing outside the gate.

He did not have the necessary skill to run with a body as light as a swallow's, just like Kaunitz. However, he could forcefully rely on his attributes to achieve a similar effect.

“What?” The Eldest Martial Brother Ogden stared with his eyes wide open, his mouth agape so wide that he could swallow a duck's egg. His gaze was fixed on Fang Xingjian's figure.

‘Such spring, such explosive energy... How could his attributes be so high? Even Kaunitz wouldn't be able to do this!’

Besides him, a few other juniors from The School of Sword Arts also had their mouths agape. They shouted out in disbelief, “Eldest Martial Brother, is that Fang Xingjian?”

“That Fang Xingjian who had been hiding for a few months, not daring to show his face?”

Second Martial Brother Lambert's eyes gleamed as he smiled to himself. ‘Good chap, you're just like I thought you were. You didn't give up.’

‘I must put in effort as well.’

The next moment, Lambert released a burst, the muscles all over his body swelling up like armor. He squeezed through the other participants beside him with ease as he dashed for the gate.

Ogden had also regained his senses, his face paling as he recalled how foolishly he had acted in front of Fang Xingjian.

But although he regretted offending Fang Xingjian, he still channeled all his strength and dashed for the door.

‘Drat, how could Fang Xingjian have improved so much? What happened?’

‘This isn’t good. I must have been too conceited after picking up the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique.’

‘I’d better get Young Master Kaunitz to help me out later. Fang Xingjian can’t shake off Kaunitz. So long as Young Master Kaunitz is around, he wouldn’t dare to do anything to me.’

From his conjectures, even though Fang Xingjian had surpassed him, no matter how strong he had gotten, he would still not be able to surpass Kaunitz.

On the other hand, Fang Xingjian did not care at all about what others thought. He had only one goal in the Prefectural Selection, namely to get first place, entering the Kirst Royal Academy as a Prefectural Champion. Only then would he be able to enjoy the best treatment, the best resources, and thus become even stronger.

With this outburst, he became filled to the brim with energy, power surging through him like the fierce neighs of stampeding horses. As he took one step after another, each of his steps made a hole in the ground. He propelled himself by slanting his heel and the tip of his toes in the holes, pushing forth at a crazy speed.

In the blink of an eye, he had overtaken Kaunitz and the others, already heading for Robert, who was in the lead.

Seeing that they had been overtaken, Barbara and the others’ their faces turned pale. They had initially been saving some

energy, but now they decided to channel it as well, and burst forth at full speed.

All four of them pushed forward, soon running two times faster than before.

The four's full speed charge was completely different from them holding back. The energy in Kaunitz's muscles from his four limbs exploded at full capacity, his lungs contracting fiercely, and his heart pounding hard like a drum, constantly providing his whole body its required amount of energy.

They had initially thought that their energy explosion would allow them to easily overtake their opponent. However, although Kaunitz was exerting every single ounce of his strength, he stared in disbelief as he saw Fang Xingjian's figure getting further and further away.

'How is this possible?' Kaunitz thought to himself in astonishment, all the time staring in disbelief at Fang Xingjian who was getting further away. 'My agility and strength have already reached 30 points, but to think that he could still shake me off! How high are his attributes?'

Barbara felt her lungs constantly contracting. Her heart was pounding so fast that she felt as if it would push through her chest. Out of the four, her endurance attribute was the weakest, and she was also the first to feel exhausted.

'Drat, if this goes on, my physical strength will be completely exhausted.'

Thinking of this, although still unwilling, she gradually slowed down, watching Kaunitz and the others leave her behind.

Kaunitz and the others did not say anything about Barbara being left behind. Whether it was Kaunitz, the wild man Boris, or even Ferdinand dressed in white, their faces were flushed red as they pushed all their vital energy, blood and muscles to their highest

capacity. A large amount of sweat and steam kept coming up from their bodies, as if they were three engines running crazily.

They did not even have the spare strength to speak. But even so, the gap in attributes between two people was not something that could be reduced by relying on short bursts.

Fang Xingjian had long gone out of their sight.

Fang Xingjian overtook Kaunitz and the others, gradually heading for Robert, who was taking the lead. This burly man with a height of over 2.5 meters, who had gone through the first job transition and was level 15 did not display any special techniques. He had merely taken large steps while advancing, each of his steps allowing him to progress by ten meters. He was even faster than a car on an expressway.

Just when the gap had been reduced and Fang Xingjian was about one hundred meters away from him, Robert turned his head around a little, throwing a glance to the back.

‘Oh? There’s still someone who can catch up?’

Seeing Fang Xingjian, Robert’s stone face revealed a slight provoking smile. He challengingly signaled with his finger to Fang Xingjian, starting to reduce his speed.

‘Hmm?’ Seeing the other party’s actions, Fang Xingjian frowned but still headed towards him. He reduced his speed, all the while keeping his guard up.

The two of them got closer, and just when they were only ten meters away from each other, Robert suddenly paused, his legs put together. The muscles from his lower thighs exploded, and with a loud bang, he became like a fired missile charging backwards towards Fang Xingjian.

With 2.5 meters in height, and with a strength burst of 40 points, Robert had been able to quickly bring along strong gusts of wind, making Fang Xingjian feel difficulty in breathing. It was as if even

the air had thinned from the pressure of this energy.

But Fang Xingjian had been preparing for a long time. Drawing the sword from his waist, still sheathed, he pointed straight at Robert's vest.

At that moment, he was the one charging forth, while Robert was retreating. A spear-thrust at such a speed was enough to even create a hole in a metal sheet.

Even if Fang Xingjian had not drawn his sword from its sheath, the blow had been sufficient to make a Warrior of Kaunitz's level suffer from fractures and internal bleeding.

In fact, Fang Xingjian had wanted to fend off the other party with this one blow, but he had not expected that Robert would not dodge, and instead just come crashing towards him.

However, when Fang Xingjian's sword pierced the other party's back, he felt as if his sword had come into contact with the armor plate of a tank. Not only did his opponent's charging force not lessen, his arm felt numb and aching, and the sword had flown out of his hands when he had been sent tumbling.

'It's just like being hit by a train.' Fang Xingjian made over ten tumbles before he stopped on the ground and stared at Robert. He only felt a tearing pain in the muscles of his right arm, and his palm was trembling so hard that he could almost not lift it up.

The other party revealed a challenging smile, signalling with his fingers towards him, and once again went on ahead.

'This fellow...' Fang Xingjian's brows furrowed. He picked up the sword with his left hand, stood up, and chased after him.

Chapter 27 Second

Seeing Robert charge away like a tank before his eyes, Fang Xingjian tried to evaluate his stats.

‘My strength attribute is 36, and in our exchange earlier this guy showed a strength of 40 or higher. And most likely, that wasn’t even his full strength.

‘Plus when I pierced his vest before, my weapon seemed to be blocked by a layer of something... Is that the extraordinary strength gained from the first job transition?’

Seeing that Fang Xingjian was still following behind him, Robert laughed coldly and said, “Haha! Why? Are you still thinking of overtaking me? Do you still not understand the gap between one who has gone through the first job transition and one who hasn’t? Rascal, I can crush you to death with only one of my fingers!”

He was running at an extreme speed and talking loudly at the same time, but despite his display of such profound physical strength, he still looked composed.

Fang Xingjian did not say anything, but followed behind at a distance of about one hundred meters, neither accelerating nor retreating.

Robert’s eyes gleamed, and he started to increase his speed. However, he soon realised that Fang Xingjian did not care at all for his provocation. When he increased his speed Fang Xingjian would follow, and when he slowed down so would Fang Xingjian, all the while maintaining the one hundred meter distance, getting neither closer nor further away from him.

‘This rascal.’ A tinge of a smile appeared in the corner of Robert’s mouth.

During the Prefectural Selection, examinees were not allowed to directly attack other people in order to eliminate them. The most

they could do was to provoke them verbally, or collide against them while running. The reason why Robert had purposely knocked into Fang Xingjian earlier was to mess up his rhythm and to waste his physical strength, so that he himself would get a better advantage in the following two stages, thus setting a better foundation for his own success. After all, the following two rounds did not test one's attributes, so his advantage as one who had gone through the first transition would be much weaker.

The reason why a Warrior like him, who had already been through the first transition, attended the Prefectural Selection was for the sake of the Regional Selection to follow. It was highly possible that a person such as Fang Xingjian, who was obviously a guy with plenty of potential, would be a threat to him in the second and third stages.

However, it was obvious that Fang Xingjian had no thoughts of confronting a person who had been through the first job transition straight on. He was clearly planning to vie only for second place in the first stage.

Robert knew that if he were to pester the opponent again, he would then be wasting his own physical strength, and messing up his own rhythms. There would only be disadvantages instead of advantages. Therefore, he threw Fang Xingjian a few more glances and gave him a meaningful smile before moving ahead in his own rhythm.

“Hmph, count yourself smart.

“From now on, don't get any closer to me than one hundred meters. If not, I'll cripple you.”

Fang Xingjian stared at Robert coldly, a killing aura flashing in his eyes, but did not say anything. It was not the time to give in to spur of the moment actions.

...

About twelve kilometers away from the drill grounds, at the entrance of the KIRST Royal Academy, the red-haired Knight Hogan was yawning. Beside him was another examiner for the Prefectural Selection. This time around, it was KIRST Royal Academy's physical instructor. A level 19 Knight who had gone through the first transition, Dick.

This physical instructor was bald, and was wearing light attire. Be it his physique or his looks, he only gave off the feeling of being plain and simple.

Looking at the yawning Hogan, he raised his brows, saying, "To be able to run twelve kilometers within ten minutes, one must have acquired at least 20 points each in terms of strength, agility and endurance. Most likely, only about 10% of the examinees will be able to pass this test."

Strength was related to the level of resistance met when one's muscles were working, agility was directly proportional to the muscles' rate of contraction, and endurance was represented by the level of endurance one's muscles and blood vessels had. In a long distance running competition, one had to have all three attributes well-developed in order to come out among the top few.

The fitness instructor Dick continued, "I heard that this time around, Fei Yang Knight Academy, Tresia Knight Academy, Shadow Moon Academy and the Aristocrat Academy have each sent a representative. Even the leader of the Tyrant Fist Dojo has disbanded his dojo.

"Seems that the results for this term will be quite good, and that there might be a few talents who can advance to the Regional Selection. By then, not only us, even the City Lord and the Headmaster would have a much better performance assessment."

The Empire placed great emphasis on the selection of Knights. The training and social culture of each prefecture were taken seriously, and the performance assessments of officials everywhere

would be affected by the number of Knights selected from their district each year.

Hogan said, sluggishly, “It’s not that easy to advance. Have you forgotten the Prefectural Selection two years ago? There were two monsters who were even stronger than the two of us, but they were still completely wiped out.

“That was because there were too many monsters participating in the same term.

“And I’ve heard that Kaunitz has mastered all of Tresia’s basic sword techniques, and has even gone to train at The School of Sword Arts in an attempt to gain the ‘Sword Specialist’ speciality.

“Since he was able to achieve so much at his age, we can have high expectations of him. He might be able to go through the second transition in the near future.” Dick was obviously well-informed regarding this term’s few seeded examinees.

“And for Shadow Moon Academy’s Boris, it’s said that he was born with three specialities, and that he is a genius amongst geniuses.

“Fei Yang’s Barbara isn’t too bad either. There are quite a few teachers who have set their sights on her and who wish to take her in as their disciple.

“And Ferdinand. He is the City Lord’s nephew, and has been under Aristocrat Academy’s careful nurture since young. It’s said that their Department of Spear Arts has already planned out the route for his first job transition and for his development.

“After training for a few years, they will all have the chance to get through the Regional Selections.”

“No one can be certain of the things in the future.” Hogan suddenly fixed his gaze and said, “Someone’s here. This was faster than I had expected.”

“First place will naturally go to Robert.” Dick slightly squinted

his eyes, and was also able to see the figure a few hundred meters away from them dashing in their direction. But when he saw the black spot behind the figure, he was slightly stunned, “Oh? To think that someone could stay so close behind him? It seems that someone has been holding back their actual ability.

“Is it Kaunitz? Barbara? Ferdinand or Boris?”

Under Dick and Hogan’s astonished gazes, Robert passed through the gates of the Royal Academy in a few strides, and the staff went up to record his name, number and results.

When they saw Fang Xingjian, all of them were shocked.

“Where did this guy come from?” Dick asked in astonishment.

“You’ll find out soon.” Hogan smiled. “Dick, according to what you said earlier, you think that Kaunitz, Robert and the others would take the top five places this time around, and that it’s them who have the potential to advance from the Regional Selection in the nearby future? I beg to differ. I feel that compared to them, this fellow is even more promising.”

Dick had never thought that he would be slapped in the face by reality after his previous confident speech and that he would even be teased by Hogan. His face turned black as he said, “This just proves His Majesty’s success in making the world a better place, and the prominence of our Kirst’s training culture.

“So of course it’s better if there are as many geniuses as possible. How I wish that a few more geniuses would appear and give me slaps in the face!”

Saying that, he suddenly turned around and said, “But the Prefectural Selection does not merely test one’s attributes. The crux lies in one’s potential and talent. Although he might be able to gain second place with his physical strength, it doesn’t mean that his talent and potential will surpass those of Kaunitz and the others, and it doesn’t mean that he really is a talent.

“In terms of natural abilities, I feel that Kaunitz and the others are more promising.”

Dick appeared simple and straightforward, but from his words, one could tell that he actually thought things through quite well, and that he was not one to be trifled with. Indeed, this was the case. Coming from an aristocratic family, he tended to be brutal and unscrupulous in order to reach his goal, yet he also knew when to retreat.

Chapter 28 Stage Cleared

Hogan obvious knew Dick's personality, so he had not been keeping a close relationship with him. Laughing right away, he said, "Hehe, there's really no way you can judge his talent with a single glance."

Glancing sideways at Fang Xingjian, and seeing the tattered clothes and frost on his face, Dick knew immediately that Fang Xingjian did not hail from any kind of prestigious background, and that he ought to be a commoner. Then, he replied, "Oh? You think that his talent is good?" Dick, having been born of nobility, was looking down on the commoners with great talent the most, and he was also jealous of them. Thus, from the first glance, Fang Xingjian had already filled his heart with unhappiness.

Contrary to expectations, Hogan hailed from a poor and humble family. Therefore, seeing Fang Xingjian's appearance and learning of his circumstances, in his heart, he secretly felt a sense of closeness to this examinee.

Hearing Dick's reply, Hogan laughed, saying, "I feel that he's not too bad. How about it, do you want to make a bet with me? He will get one of the top five rankings in the Prefectural Selection."

"Top five?" Dick furrowed his brows. Robert had already completed his first transition. No matter what, Fang Xingjian would never be able to defeat him. In order to enter the top five, he would have to defeat either Kaunitz, Barbara, Boris, or Ferdinand.

For him to surpass the four of them? All of them are proud offspring of the heavens. They will become Kirst's pillars in ten years. How can this poor chap of unknown origins surpass them? It's impossible." In a soft voice, Dick went on, "How much money do you want to bet?"

"How about one hundred gold?" Hogan nonchalantly laughed along.

After hearing his answer, Dick replied in shock, “One hundred gold?!” It was basically his earnings for an entire year!

However, after thinking about it for a few seconds and glancing a few more times at Fang Xingjian, he silently exclaimed in his heart, ‘Kaunitz and the others have been nurtured by their clans from the moment they were born. Whether teachers or martial arts guidance, medicinal cuisine or food, they haven’t ever lacked any of it. And completing their first job transition is a done deal for them. Their target has always been the second and third transitions.

‘If a poor chap manages to surpass such geniuses, so what if I lose one hundred gold?’

After thinking about this, he smiled. “Okay, Hogan, I will wait to collect the gold from you.”

On the other side, Fang Xingjian and the rest had already registered their names. Less than thirty seconds later, Kaunitz and the other three had also caught up, looking at Fang Xingjian as if they were looking at a monster.

Unexpectedly, they had not been able to catch up to Fang Xingjian from beginning to end.

Kaunitz in particular, kept looking at Fang Xingjian as though he had turned into a stranger. The way he was acting obviously attracted the other three’s attention.

Barbara’s countenance was slightly off as she glanced at Fang Xingjian before asking Kaunitz, “You know him?”

“Mmm.” Immediately, Kaunitz revealed information about Fang Xingjian. “A month ago, he wasn’t up to my level at all. How could he have surpassed me in terms of physical power now?”

“Are you saying that he’s a commoner without any special background?” asked Boris from Shadow Moon Academy.

Kaunitz disgruntledly replied, “This poor chap didn’t even have

the money for food back then.”

“Without any special background to learn high level techniques, without money to buy medicinal aid or medicinal cuisine, and without the nourishment from ferocious beasts, the chance that his attributes would surpass yours is very little.” Boris continued, “Unless he has a specialization for a particular attribute.”

From beginning to end Ferdinand had stayed silent. He drew in several deep breaths to recover from his fatigue and said, “Maybe he’s specialized in long distance running?”

Hearing his words, the three others concurred, with a glint in their eyes. “That’s highly possible.”

Their deductions followed logic. One had to understand that the four of them had been painstakingly nurtured ever since they were young, and countless riches had already been spent on them. No one knew how much medicinal cuisine and ferocious beasts they had taken, or how many hours they had spent in assiduous training.

Those whose attributes might surpass theirs while at level 9 before their first transition could only be either the individuals from the renowned extraordinary factions or those from the royal family, as well as the students who were nurtured by the Empire’s core pillars.

Normally, that would be the case. If Fang Xingjian had not possessed the number one sword talent, even if he practiced for 24 hours a day, it would have been impossible for him to surpass any one of the four.

‘Hmph, consider yourself worthy this time, since you surpassed us in this test of physical prowess. It won’t be so easy the next round. Second place must be mine this time around.’ Barbara held a cold smile on her face as she looked at Fang Xingjian. She was the proudest and most self-confident out of the four of them. Thus, losing to Fang Xingjian had brought a feeling of unwillingness in

her heart.

Kaunitz gazed at Fang Xingjian, thinking, 'This fellow's potential was better than what I had imagined.' However, thinking of how he had defeated Fang Xingjian in every single spar for the past few months, he could not even consider Fang Xingjian being able to surpass him.

'Hmm, why don't I recruit him to my family soon? Based on the potential he showcased, he's already many times stronger than many people from our clan. Father would surely consent to this arrangement.

'After this, I can get him to practice the three basic sword techniques of The School of Sword Arts with me, and I will be able to obtain Sword Specialist sooner!'

As for Boris and Ferdinand, they were both extremely shocked that Fang Xingjian had surpassed them in the first round. However, since young they had been nurtured to become the elites of the elites, and had never lacked self-confidence. At least until now, in their eyes, the true opponents were the geniuses hailing from the three other academies.

After a while, more and more participants arrived at the academy's entrance. Needless to say, however, that they were not able to attract Kaunitz and the other's interest and attention.

Lambert and Ogden had managed to rush through in the last ten seconds, after which the gate to the academy had been closed by the staff.

One participant heaved and panted heavily, crawling outside the academy gates. His face was filled with despair as he glanced in the direction of the Royal Academy. Both his hands clutched tightly at the railings as he wailed, "Sir, please, please let me enter! I was only late by a few seconds! This is the last year I'm able to participate in the Prefectural Selection! Please let me enter!"

Another middle-aged guy coughed as he shouted, “Sir, I had the flu today, and I was unable to exhibit my full potential. Please give me another chance!”

“Sir, I beg you!”

“I beg you!”

Looking at the increasing number of students outside crying in agony, a bizarre expression appeared on the faces of the examinees, Fang Xingjian, Kaunitz, and the others.

All these failures were people who had participated over ten times, but had yet to pass. And among them, there were even people whose hair had already turned white. Their eyes were filled with hopelessness.

Eldest Martial Brother Ogden and Second Martial Brother Lambert locked gazes for a moment, feelings of thankfulness swimming in their eyes.

Just last year, they had been the same as all those outside the gate.

Hogan clapped his hands and said, “Alright, you don’t need to concern yourselves with the failures outside of our city gates. Come with me now and prepare for the second round.”

After this, the examinees who had passed the first test followed behind Hogan, walking towards the depths of Kirst’s Royal Academy.

Fang Xingjian estimated the number of people around him and noticed that there was a total of only around three hundred people who had passed the first round.

Chapter 29 Five Categories

The first stage of the Prefectural Selection alone was enough to eliminate 90% of the examinees, which showed how ruthless the selection was.

The remaining examinees were also extremely nervous.

However, the view within the Royal Academy caught the attention of all the examinees. The intriguing sight was not the vast training grounds, nor the abundant training equipment or the academic buildings the size of a castle, but the people they saw on the way.

All kinds of young men, middle-aged people, young ladies and old men were either training or talking a walk, gathering for a chat or having a game of chess. They seemed very relaxed, with prideful dispositions, the achievement of success shining on their faces

The only similarity between them was their Knight attire. They were all Knights.

The students recruited by KIRST Royal Academy were limited to the Knights who had passed the Prefectural Selection in each year. That was why the students there were all Knights.

Within the short five minute walk, they managed to see at least over twenty Knights. When had the three hundred examinees, just having passed the first stage, ever managed to see so many Knights in one place?

They looked at the people wearing Knight attire. Some of them looked majestic, some suave, some powerful, and some graceful. There were Knights of all sorts and appearances, and each of them had a unique charm, giving off rich auras of life and vitality.

The gazes of the examinees were full of yearning and envy as they looked at the Knights.

The Knights here were a hundred times more blissful than the

old days' university students on Earth, who had attended Tsinghua University or Peking University [1].

Ogden and Lambert also seemed slightly agitated. No fretting about food and clothing due to the allowance provided by the country, along with various resources provided to aid their training, plus social status which far exceeded that of an ordinary person and the privilege of not being restricted by ordinary law. It was a life which they long dreamed of having.

That moment clearly showed the large difference between an ordinary person and a person belonging to an aristocratic family. Most of the commoners would not feel at ease upon seeing so many Knights. They would feel restricted, and inferiority would reflect in their gazes.

On the other hand, those from aristocratic families seemed more at ease, and were even able to go up to many of the Knights and greet them.

“Hey, Kaunitz, you’re really here!” A Knight with a slender figure and a slightly feminine appearance walked towards the side of the group.

There were a few other Knights beside him, but it was obvious that the feminine-looking guy was the leader.

“Senior.” Kaunitz vaguely nodded.

“Hehe, do your best and try to get the position of the Prefectural Champion for our Tresia Academy.” It seemed that the feminine-looking Knight was only passing by, leaving quickly after a short greeting.

Thereafter, Barbara and Ferdinand from the Aristocrat Academy also met up with their acquaintances. They had a few relatives and seniors who had become Knights and who were now enrolled in KIRST Royal Academy.

Ogden, the Eldest Martial Brother in The School of Sword Arts,

said in a soft envious tone, “They grew up with Knights since young, and were able to meet them often and even get guidance from them. It’s no wonder their results are better than ours.”

“So what? Fang Xingjian’s result this time around was close to theirs,” Lambert said, unconvinced.

“Haha, you think that Fang Xingjian can win over them?” Ogden shook his head, nothing but thick jealousy in his gaze as he looked at Kaunitz and the others. “Fang Xingjian would only be in sixth place for the first stage, at best. He lost to Kaunitz every single time back in The School of Sword Arts. How could he possibly win this time around?”

Lambert was silent. He could not rebut his words.

Obviously, the two of them had been in the last batch of contestants to charge past the entrance, and did not know the order in which Fang Xingjian and the others had entered. In fact, other than the staff who were in charge of registering the timing, the examiners, Fang Xingjian and the first few competitors, there was no way the other examinees would know.

Not long after, the group arrived to some huge training grounds covered in marble. Tens of examiners were already waiting there.

Dick took a look at the examinees and said, “Having passed the test for physical strength in the first stage, you can already be counted among the elite Warriors in KIRST. But in order to become Knights and to bask in the majestic glory of His Majesty, this is still far from enough.

A strong physique, perfected techniques, and unparalleled talent. Only those who can meet all three criteria will be able to become Knights.

The second stage will be testing you on your techniques. It will be divided into five basic categories, namely Sword and Saber, Staff and Rod, Bow and Arrow, Bare-handed, and Miscellaneous. Do

your best.”

Fang Xingjian swept his eyes across the field and saw a sign inscribed with the words ‘Sword and Saber’ on the extreme northern side of the training grounds, placed in front of two examiners.

The other examinees also went to look for the categories which they excelled in. Kaunitz was the first to head towards the examiners in charge of Sword and Saber.

Soon after, having chosen between the five, each examinee was standing in their respective category. Fang Xingjian looked around. Kaunitz, Ogden and Lambert were, naturally, all in the Sword and Saber category. There were over eighty people lined up at the sign, making it the largest group amongst the five categories.

And there was a total of seven examiners in charge of the Sword and Saber category. Each of them was wearing Knight attire, and stern looks.

The examinations of the Prefectural Selection affected the future of each examinee. The selections were a political project highly regarded by the Empire’s higher management. None of the examiners would dare to treat this lightly, every one of them being extremely serious when assessing each examinee’s performance and when giving the scores.

Seeing that everyone had been separated into different categories, an Asian-looking examiner about fifty to sixty years of age, with black hair and yellow skin, said, “The test is very simple. Each of you will take turns to display and demonstrate your best set of sword techniques before exchanging three blows each with the seven of us.

“We will each give you a score, and your final score for this round will be the average of these. Your final score will be added to your result in the third stage of the selection.

“Those ranked in the top ten will be able to pass this Prefectural Selection and become Knights.”

The black-haired old man wore a solemn expression, each word he said flashing before the examinees' eyes like the glint of swords. Under his gaze, they had the feeling of being pointed at with the tip of a sword.

Fang Xingjian could sense that the examiner's cultivation level ought to be extremely high. He could hear a few contestants chatting softly behind him.

“This is KIRST Royal Academy's chief sword art instructor, Huang Lin. Other than the Headmaster, he is the only strong Warrior who has gone through the second job transition.”

“In the whole academy, only him and the Headmaster have undergone the second job transition. How I wish I could become a Knight and be taken in by him as a disciple!”

“How would that be possible? I heard that he hasn't taken in a disciple for five years and has only been giving sword arts guidance during lessons.”

It was obvious that this Huang Lin had also inherited blood from the Western Land, thus having black hair and yellow skin. However, most importantly, he had the best level of sword cultivation in the whole academy.

Fang Xingjian's gaze flickered. It would be for the best if he could be taken in as his disciple. And this would depend on his performance in the next two stages.

[1] Renowned universities in China.

Chapter 30 Making A Show of Oneself

“Number 22! Round Table Sword Society, Locke.”

These numbers had obviously been issued to each of the examinees from the very beginning of the selection. Of course, since many of the participants had been eliminated in the first stage, the numbers were being skipped through very quickly.

With a shout, an examinee drew the sword at his waist and walked to stand before the seven examiners. After taking a bow, he started to demonstrate a set of sword technique.

This set of sword technique was complicated, agile, and required one to be extremely good at controlling the strength in one's arms. The person demonstrating it had very solid foundations, clearly having fully grasped and mastered it.

Looking at his performance, the seven examiners each had a different reaction. Some of them nodded, others shook their heads and sighed, and some only showed poker faces. After the examinee had completed his demonstration, they each wrote something in their own booklets.

After that, the examinee had to exchange three blows on stage with each of the examiners. He gave a respectful greeting bow, the examiner nodding lightly in reply before attacking.

After a round of exchange with each of the examiners, Locke was looking dejected, as if he was unsatisfied with his own performance.

Just so, each of the examinees took turns at being assessed, their level of cultivation in sword arts being thoroughly scrutinized.

After the assessment, some thumped their chests in disappointment while others beamed with joy.

Soon enough, over twenty people had completed the second stage. The member of staff called out, “Number 801, Tresia Knight

Academy, Kaunitz.”

“Is that the Kaunitz?”

“The Tresia Clan’s new generation super genius.”

The examinees collectively started chattering in low voices, and even the seven examiners smiled, nodding and exchanging words between them.

“Oh? This is the Kaunitz from Tresia Clan?”

A young Knight in his thirties smiled and looked towards Huang Lin beside him, saying, “He is Tresia’s pillar in this generation. Lord, will you be taking him as your disciple?”

Huang Lin, who had stayed expressionless during the previous assessments finally showed a slight waver in his eyes as he said, “We’ll see.”

Amidst the crowd’s chattering, Kaunitz revealed a confident smile. He had long been accustomed to being in the limelight.

With a clank, Kaunitz drew his sword from its sheath, demonstrating each move from the Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique.

Upon seeing his set of sword technique, many examiners’ eyes lit up.

“Oh? His organs are trembling, his four limbs are one with the body, his spine is strong as a huge dragon’s, and the sound of his pumping heart... It really is perfect...” said one of the examiners. “He ought to have reached level 10 in the Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique. No, based on the rumors, he’s already reached level 12.”

“This person is extremely talented and in the future he will definitely become a Master Swordsman of his generation.”

“That’s right, that’s right.” Another examiner stroke his beard in satisfaction as he said, “The Tresia-Style Foundation Sword

Technique requires very high control of the organs, bones, and vessels. Should there be any mistakes, not only would it be unable to nurture the body, it would even injure it. Amongst the many techniques of the Training Way, it is a most overbearing one. To be able to reach this stage at his age... He truly is a genius amongst geniuses!”

“He is already well trained both internally and externally. Once he becomes a Knight, he will probably be able to complete the first transition within a month,” another white-bearded examiner said. “There’ll be another star of the Empire.”

“Haha, I’m not sure about other categories, but it seems like the champion for the Sword and Saber category is settled.” The young examiner looked towards Huang Lin and asked, “Lord, what do you think?”

Huang Lin nodded, and for the first time, a satisfied expression was seen on his face. However, he still said, “Let’s check out his strength.”

After Kaunitz demonstrated the Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique, the seven invigilators took turns to assess him. Their characters and sword techniques were all different. Some of them focused on attack, others on defense, and some simply exchanged blows.

They all felt Kaunitz’s strength control during the exchange. Being able to experience it first hand made everything even clearer than when they had simply been observing.

“He really has mastered both internal and external techniques to perfection.”

“There are probably very few below the Knight rank who can surpass him in terms of technique.”

“I heard he’s also practised the three basic sword techniques of The School of Sword Arts. He will probably be able to attain the

Sword Specialist speciality soon.”

The last to step up was, naturally, the head examiner, Huang Lin. He did not draw his sword, but merely stood there, saying, “You can make your move directly.”

“I ask the Lord to give me your guidance.” Kaunitz bowed, and the sword in his hands flashed like a bolt of lightning, strength exploding from his muscles and bones as if an explosion had ignited the surrounding air. He pressured the air as if he was a human Gundam[1], fiercely piercing towards Huang Lin.

The air in the surroundings exploded and the stone tiles under his feet shattered.

This sword attack of his was similar to a ballista being used to attack city walls in war time. Amongst those present, only the Knights and a few of the most outstanding examinees could see its tracks. People like Lambert and Ogden could only hear a loud boom. In the shrouding mist, Huang Lin had only reached out with his thumb and index finger, gently holding onto Kaunitz’s sword.

Huang Lin moved as if he were appreciating good wine or famous art. The fingers pinching the sword twisted gently as he pondered on the strength in Kaunitz’s attack.

“Your strength isn’t bad.” Huang Lin nodded in satisfaction and said, “One sword move is sufficient. The remaining two won’t be necessary.”

Kaunitz broke out into an excited smile, the rest who were witnessing this scene looking at him in jealousy and envy.

In this section, the only people left from The School of Sword Arts were Eldest Martial Brother Ogden, Second Martial Brother Lambert, and Fang Xingjian. They were also standing quite close to each other.

Seeing this scene, Eldest Martial Brother Ogden mumbled, “Passed with just one move? Seems like Kaunitz will be the one to

come out as first amongst those in the Sword and Saber category. But I wonder how would he fare in the overall top five?”

As he said this, he threw a glance at Fang Xingjian and coldly asked him, “Fang Xingjian, are you still thinking of catching up to Young Master Kaunitz? I’m not trying to nag, but a genius like Kaunitz is fated to have a bright future and would eventually leave his name in history. It would be better for us to build a good relationship with him. Even if he were to eat meat, we would be able to enjoy riches just from following him and drinking some soup at his side. I’m only telling you this since you are my younger Martial Brother. You had better go apologize to him soon...”

Second Martial Brother Lambert’s expression seemed complicated as he lamented to himself, ‘The gap between commoners and aristocrats... Is it too large? Why do these people have such monstrous talent? I’ve been training hard since I was eight and I’ve been training with the sword all the time, except for the times when I had to eat or sleep. I haven’t dared to slack even a little. To think that despite that, I still don’t even have half his powers...’

Fang Xingjian did not want to bother with Ogden. They were from different dimensions, after all.

He looked grimly at Huang Lin. ‘To be able to receive Kaunitz’s attack with his fingers and yet not move an inch, not even using the extraordinary strength from the first and second transitions. How high are Huang Lin’s attributes? 100? 120?’

Fang Xingjian did not know, since it far exceeded the domain he was familiar with. He only knew that compared to 99% of the Warriors in Demonic City who had also gone through the second transition, he was much stronger.

The other examinees continued to take their turns on stage, but there was none other who had a performance as shocking as Kaunitz’s. A few of them even made the examiners shake their

heads in dissatisfaction.

“Next up, number 2034. The School of Sword Arts, Fang Xingjian.”

Fang Xingjian focused his gaze as he walked out front, his sword already drawn. However, he had yet to decide which set of sword technique he ought to demonstrate.

Logically speaking, since Kaunitz’s level 12 Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique had already astonished the examiners, if Fang Xingjian were to demonstrate his level 20 Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique, he would definitely be able to get a better result.

This was because, compared to the ordinary techniques of the Nurturing Path, it was techniques such as this one, which could nurture the organs and modify the physical body, that were truly profound and that could display a higher level of skill. It was much better to demonstrate internal sword techniques rather than external sword techniques such as the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique and the Eagle Sword Technique.

Looking at them in comparison, if he were to demonstrate ordinary basic sword techniques it would be like him having a delayed start to a race.

However, looking at the seven examiners before him, as well as Kaunitz, Ogden and Lambert who were also looking at him, he knew that he had to hide the fact that he had acquired Tresia Knight Academy’s unique sword techniques, including the Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique.

And although the Nine Yang Divine Sword belonged to The School of Sword Arts, Kyle had not imparted it to him yet.

Although these few sets of sword techniques were top grade, they had not been obtained through legitimate means, so there was no way he was going to bring them out.

‘I have already placed second in the stage testing our physical abilities. For this stage, even if I were to demonstrate a basic sword technique such as the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, the worst that could happen would be falling behind Kaunitz. Even so, I would still be able to rank among the top ten quite easily.

‘If that’s the case, I can only give up on getting better grades in the second stage, and then try to fight for a better position in the third stage.’

[1] A science fiction Japanese animation series which features giant robots called “mobile suits”, as well as titular mobile suits carrying the name “Gundam.”
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gundam>

Chapter 31 Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique

Therefore, Fang Xingjian stepped forth and demonstrated his level 30 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

At the start, when the examiners saw that he was only demonstrating a set of basic sword technique from The School of Sword Arts, they did not look surprised.

But as Fang Xingjian's sword swayed when he channeled the vital energy and blood throughout his whole body, employing his muscles, the longsword cut across the air and brought forth a thunderous buzzing sound. It was as if each movement of his sword was whipping the air, creating explosive sounds.

"Oh? The foundation of this Grizzly Bear Sword Technique is very solid."

"Although it does not engage the organs, he is already the best amongst those present in terms of the strength originating from his muscles and bones."

A white-bearded examiner laughed out loud and said, "To think that there is a good seed other than Kaunitz in this year's Prefectural Selection."

"Mmm, his grasp of techniques is inferior to Kaunitz's, but with just this set of the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique and his understanding of engaging his muscles and bones it has already reached the limits one could reach before going through the first transition."

"Pity, such a pity. If Kaunitz was not around, he would be first."

Following that, each of the examiners exchanged blows with Fang Xingjian and they all seemed very impressed.

The young examiner threw a glance at Huang Lin who was beside

him. When he saw his grading for Fang Xingjian, he got a shock, “My Lord, this score...” He could not understand why he would give Fang Xingjian a higher score than Kaunitz. A perfect score straight off the bat!

Huang Lin shook his head and said, “I’ll tell you after the third stage is over. By then, you guys may all want to amend the scores you’ve given him.”

The young examiner asked a few more questions, but Huang Lin refused to say anything further. This made the former throw a curious glance at Fang Xingjian. He could not understand what was so special about him that would cause Huang Lin to give him such a high score.

However, the two of them had only discussed it softly between themselves, so the rest of the examinees were completely unaware of this.

Just like that, although Fang Xingjian had not performed as well as Kaunitz, he also qualified as one of the top scorers. This situation led to the crowd looking at him in envy.

Kaunitz nodded and thought to himself, ‘He really isn’t too bad. Despite the fact that he isn’t able to control his organs like I am, his grasp on the control of his muscles and bones would not lose to mine. This fellow’s improvement is really swift.

Interesting. For the past few months, I’ve been teaching him a lesson each and every day. Seems like this has aroused his fighting spirit.

But looking at the him right now, he’ll probably need to put in more effort before he can achieve a better grasp on his techniques.’

Eldest Martial Brother Ogden and Second Martial Brother Lambert felt that Fang Xingjian’s Grizzly Sword Technique was very strong, stronger than theirs. However, since even most of the examiners were unable to tell exactly how strong it was, they

themselves were, obviously, unable to tell as well. Nor could they realize that Fang Xingjian's Grizzly Bear Sword Technique had already reached level 30.

However, when Ogden saw Fang Xingjian returning, he still asked, "Fang Xingjian, what's the level of your Grizzly Bear Sword Technique?" He could not understand how the other party could be so good with only a few months' practice.

Seeing that Fang Xingjian had fully ignored him, Ogden's face crumbled, and he started thinking of how to get Kaunitz to deal with Fang Xingjian at a later point in time.

Finally, when the assessments for all eighty participants had ended, the sun was already setting.

Although the second stage had ended, other than people like Fang Xingjian and Kaunitz who had obviously had good results, most of them did not know their own scores, and could only nervously look at the seven examiners.

Huang Lin gave a cough and said, "Alright, this marks the end of the second stage. Before we proceed with the third stage of the assessment, we'll take you to have your meal."

They took the group of examinees to the academy's canteen, where a sumptuous dinner had already been prepared for them. Most of the examinees had not eaten since morning and were already starving.

Fang Xingjian also rubbed his tummy, feeling extremely hungry as he went straight up, grabbed a few plates of food, and started eating. The food at the Royal Academy was obviously much better than the food at The School of Sword Arts. However, other than Fang Xingjian, the rest of the examinees only ate until they were half full before they turned their attention back to the exams.

Fang Xingjian was the only one in the canteen who did not stop stuffing food into his mouth. It had been months since he'd had

such a satisfying meal. All this time, he had never been able to have a full meal, yet he'd had to continue with his sword practice. He had truly been starving for food.

One examinee who was near him could not hold it in, and gave him a kind reminder, "Eating too much is bad for digestion, and will make your brain dull. Do you still want to continue participating in the Prefectural Selection?"

Fang Xingjian could not be bothered to care about him. With his appetite, he would not be half full even after eating all of the food on the table before him.

Seeing that he had ended up eating faster, a commoner examinee gave a cold snort and said, "I especially despise those who covet petty gains."

Fang Xingjian did not bother with those words. His heart was like an iceberg. Only when he recalled the events in Demonic City would he flare up. Moreover, given his physical strength, he was only half full with what he had eaten so far.

When the rest of the people, especially the aristocrats, saw his behavior akin to that of a refugee, they could not help but show gazes full of contempt.

Eldest Martial Brother Ogden and Second Martial Brother Lambert also felt awkward, so they took their plates and sat a few meters away from Fang Xingjian.

In a corner of the canteen, Dick and Hogan sat opposite each other, and the former smiled and said, "I enquired about the situation in the Sword and Saber category. Kaunitz had an overwhelming victory over Fang Xingjian. Hogan, I think you can start to prepare the money for the bet."

Hogan frowned and replied, feeling slightly impatient, "The bet is not over yet. Why are you in such a rush?"

Dick only said proudly, "I'm not in a rush, but just feeling

extremely happy to be able to win a hundred gold from a miser like yourself.”

Hogan glared at him and coldly replied, “The Prefectural Selection is not over yet. It’s still too early to judge.”

“Haha, I’ve already asked around. Fang Xingjian has only learned three sets of basic sword techniques at The School of Sword Arts,” Dick said, as if he was up to no good. “Moreover, over the past few months, he would spar with Kaunitz on their basic sword techniques, but would always end up losing. In the second stage, his overall score could not compare to Kaunitz’s, either.

“Do you really think he still has a chance?”

Seeing Hogan’s surprised expression, Dick smiled, even happier. “The gap between their talent in sword arts is extremely wide. While Fang Xingjian does have the talent to become a Knight, the future awaiting Kaunitz is the second or even third job transition. The two do not belong to the same world.

“Hogan, your insight is still as bad as before, and your temper is still as rash as before, daring me to have a bet with you without even knowing anything. You’d better change your problem of being short-tempered and rash.”

Hogan was so angry that he stood up and turned to leave, not wishing to see Dick’s proud expression any further. When he came across Fang Xingjian who was eating non-stop, he suddenly had doubts, wondering whether he had judged him wrongly.

At that moment, Kaunitz, Barbara and the others were not together. The next stage depended on the individual’s performance, and had nothing to do with other people at all. They each shut their eyes and rested, recovering energy in preparation for the final dash to fight for the first place in the Prefectural Selection.

At that moment, news came from one of the examinees.

“Did you hear? That fellow Robert actually got full marks for the previous stage.”

“What? Full marks?”

“It’s only obvious he would. He already has the abilities of one who has gone through the first transition. It’s entirely normal for him to score full marks in the tests targeted at our age group.”

“This is so unfair. How could they let a Knight take part in the Prefectural Selection with us?”

At the table beside them, Robert revealed a proud grin. However, Kaunitz and the others were frowning.

‘The gap between one who’s already gone through the first transition and one who hasn’t yet is still too big. Since that is the case, the only thing that can be done is to fight for second place, and get more resources after enrolling in the academy.’

Thinking about this, Kaunitz and the others all slowly accumulated their energy, going through the final preparations for the final stage of the exam. They knew more information regarding the top ten positions compared to the other examinees. Although everyone in the top ten was able to qualify as a Knight, the amount of nurturing, resources and attention received by the one in first place and the one in tenth place would be on a different scale altogether.

This was especially so regarding choosing one’s mentor for skills and specialties. The higher the rank, the more advantageous it was for the person. It was like rolling a snowball: a slight difference in rank could result in an increasingly wider gap in power between two people.

After the meal, for the third stage, they still stayed split into the five categories. Those in the Sword and Saber category were brought to a training room the size of a soccer field.

Upon entering, their attention was caught by the countless

images on the stone walls of the training room. They represented a man carrying a longsword, demonstrating sword stances. It was a set of sword technique engraved on the stone walls.

Just when everyone was captivated by the drawings of the sword technique on the walls, Huang Lin's voice rang out.

“There are one hundred and one murals in the north, south, east and west of the room, recording two sets of sword techniques. The third stage's assessment is very simple. Each of you will simply need to select a set of sword technique and learn it. Anytime before midnight today, all of you please feel free to come and be assessed in the room next door. After midnight, those who have not come for the assessment will be automatically treated as having given up.

“We will determine your results for this stage based on the degree to which you have learned the technique.”

Hearing Huang Lin's words, everyone present broke into bitter smiles. In order to grasp an ordinary technique, even if there was a teacher to provide step by step guidance, it would take them a few days or even a few weeks to reach level one of the skill.

In order to learn the technique inscribed on the stone walls, an ordinary person would probably take more than a few months. Moreover, the examinees had only slightly more than six hours on hand. Even if each of the examinees here were the cream of the crop, there were still many hurdles before them.

Seeing that most of the people were dejected and despondent, Huang Lin gave them a kind reminder, “We do not expect you to fully master it, but to pick up as much as you can. The main purpose is to assess your talent and learning ability before we assign the ranking accordingly.”

“Therefore, there's no need to feel downcast. Just do your best.”

After saying his piece, he left with majority of the examiners,

assigning a few members of staff to keep an eye on the students and to prevent any cases of cheating, such as contacting people outside or to having discussions amongst themselves.

Kaunitz did not say a single word, but went straight to the first mural and started to study it closely. He thought to himself, 'With my talent, so long as I take it a step at a time and am able to perform as usual, I will definitely emerge as first in the Sword and Saber category.'

'But to overtake Barbara and the others, and to get a good ranking in the overall assessment, some luck is still needed.'

Just when he was thinking about this, at a glance, he realised that the set of sword technique on the wall was extremely complicated and hard to understand. Even if it was him, it would be unlikely for him to be able to grasp it within six hours.

The other examinees also started to learn, but as they did not know anything about the techniques drawn on the walls, they could only pick one randomly, not knowing which set was tougher and which was easier.

Even when Kaunitz was learning, he could not help but think, 'Drat it, what are these examiners thinking? To think that they brought out such a difficult set of sword technique.'

Just then, he noticed that someone was already heading for the second wall.

"You must be kidding me!" When he turned his head around, he saw that Fang Xingjian had already glanced over the first wall, and was already headed to the second one.

And in Fang Xingjian's mind, another line appeared on his Techniques Column.

'Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique (5%)'

Chapter 32 Speed Learning

‘This set of sword technique is called the Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique?’

Fang Xingjian stood in front of the second mural as he studied it. Compared to the first set, this one had a slightly higher difficulty level. The person in the mural displayed many unbelievable stances, twisting and contorting his body in unimaginable postures, as though he was practicing the Earth’s yoga.

Although this set of sword technique was somewhat difficult, he only analyzed it for three minutes before he walked to the next mural.

Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique – 10%.

The third mural’s difficulty increased yet again. The male figure in the mural constantly intertwined his hands, legs, shoulders, and waist, displaying various postures beyond an ordinary human’s limits, and relentlessly twisting about, akin to a snake.

Fang Xingjian spent five minutes on this mural before he moved on to the fourth.

Just like this, Fang Xingjian spent a total of around half an hour to go through about 25% of the murals.

At this moment, Kaunitz was only just starting his second mural, and was moving his sword according to the motions depicted on it.

Fang Xingjian’s movements easily aroused the attention of all the examinees. It was as if each and every one of his movements would make people glance in his direction. Seeing his speedy movements made many of the examinees panic.

Seeing how Fang Xingjian was moving towards another mural, Eldest Martial Brother Ogden could not hold it in anymore and shouted, “Fang Xingjian, what the hell are you trying to do? You are affecting us all!”

Fang Xingjian did not even turn his head, but continued to study the murals. He could not be bothered to even reply to Ogden.

Ogden could not help but scold him, “Kaunitz is only at the second mural, but you’ve already gone so far ahead. What are you trying to do? What you’re doing is merely trying to affect our examination.”

With Ogden’s words, most of the examinees’ attention was caught, and they looked towards Fang Xingjian with faint looks of contempt.

Seeing that Fang Xingjian continued to ignore him, he shouted out to one of the invigilators standing by the side, “Sir, Fang Xingjian is affecting all of us! Could you tell him to be serious about learning the sword technique?”

The invigilator frowned as he approached Fang Xingjian, saying, “Your actions really do arouse the suspicion that you are trying to affect the other examinees.”

Fang Xingjian faintly smiled. Before coming here, he had already done his research. With his talent, it was not a problem for him to become a Knight, but the crux was how much of his talent he could reveal.

Which also raised the question of how much acceptance and tolerance would the Royal Academy show towards one with a phenomenal level of talent to become a Knight?

Fang Xingjian wanted to understand this point, and that was why he had gathered information on many relevant cases.

In the Empire’s history, there had been countless geniuses emerging in succession, and among them there were also several whose phenomenal talent was well-known to all.

For example, fifty years before, in the South-Eastern region of the Empire, there had been an extraordinary genius. It was said that he had started practicing martial arts at the age of fifteen, and

that as a commoner, he had only spent a total of ten months to become a Knight.

However, his ending had not been a good one, as he had not accepted the olive branch^[1] extended to him by the aristocrats. In the end, his four limbs and his vertebrae had been crippled, and he had ended up as a handicapped good-for-nothing.

Naturally, the culprit had later been caught and beheaded by the Empire. However, no one knew who exactly the mastermind behind the attack had been.

In another example, amongst the Royal Academy's Royal Knights in the Empire's capital, Dong Fangling had passed the National Selection to become a Royal Knight, and had been recognized as a world-renowned genius.

This person had started practicing martial arts at the age of five, and it was said that his most amazing record had been taking only two hours to learn a set of spear technique. After which, half a year later, he had managed to bring a set of spear technique from level 1 to level 15.

Fang Xingjian had gathered a lot of information about past geniuses. Some of these geniuses had fallen, while others had achieved meteoric success. It did not depend only on the differences in talent, but also on their backgrounds, personalities and other factors.

Therefore, he had made a rough conjecture with regards to the tolerance level of the Knight Academy's higher management.

‘Using six hours to master a particular set of sword technique is definitely something that the examiners would be able to accept. Such talent, although rare in the Empire, it wasn't non-existent.

‘Something of this level will receive absolute recognition, at the same time not being terrifying enough that others would want to control or suppress it.’

Although he was fairly confident in his plan, Fang Xingjian had mulled over it for a very long time. However, he still felt nervous now that he was facing the real situation.

This was why he planned to finish learning a set of sword technique in the shortest time possible and then pretend to give up. After that, he would spend the remaining time pretending that he was studying another set of sword technique.

Just like this, he would silently learn two sets of sword techniques, but to others it would appear that he was fully focusing on mastering a single set of sword technique within six hours.

Therefore, when faced with the invigilator's question, Fang Xingjian replied, "I just want to get a general feel of these sets of sword techniques before deciding on which one of the two to learn."

Fang Xingjian's reply was very reasonable, so the invigilator was unable to say anything back. He merely nodded.

Although Ogden could not accept this, since the invigilator had not said anything, he did not dare to look for trouble.

After that, Fang Xingjian felt that he seemed to have gradually become accustomed to the Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique's style. His learning rate via observation got faster and faster, and he finally went through all the murals for the Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique within merely twenty minutes.

At the same moment, Kaunitz was only at his fourth mural, while Lambert and Ogden were still hovering at their second ones.

After this, Fang Xingjian did something completely unexpected to everyone else. He made his way towards the murals of another sword technique.

"What?" Kaunitz could finally not hold it in any longer as he inclined his head, glancing at Fang Xingjian. "What is this fellow

trying to do?”

Ogden coldly laughed as he shook his head and said, “Deliberately trying to act mysterious, wasting time...” He silently remarked in his heart, with joy, ‘The way Fang Xingjian is acting right now, so crazily, he may not even be able to enter the top ten. If that’s the case, my chances of becoming a Knight will be greater!’

Lambert was filled with worry as he cast a glance at Fang Xingjian, ‘What is going on with him?’

And just at that moment, Hogan, who had been observing by the side, could finally not hold it in any longer and stepped in. Dick, the one who bet with him, laughed, “Is this fellow feeling too nervous? Hogan, remember that you owe me a hundred gold.”

Hogan walked to Fang Xingjian and coldly spoke to him, “What’s going on with you? You’ve spent an hour analyzing the Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique. Why are you not making good use of your time to continue with it, but came over here instead? Do you know that you’re just wasting time by doing this?

“Do you think that the Prefectural Selection is some sort of game?” At the end of his speech, his voice and countenance were both strict and severe, his eyes filled with sorrow.

Fang Xingjian cast a strange glance at Hogan, not understanding why Hogan was being so nice and reminding him. However, there was no way he would be willing to give up the chance to learn another set of sword technique, and thus he used the excuse he had prepared much earlier. “That set of sword technique does not really suit me. Myself, I tend to pick up sword techniques that catch my eye much faster.”

“What rubbish.” Hogan directly pointed to the other side as he continued, “Go back and learn the Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique, don’t be wasting any more time!” His eyes were filled with pain.

Fang Xingjian furrowed his brows as he said, “This should have nothing to do with you.” As he said this, he saw a cold glint of light flickering in Hogan’s eyes, and he immediately shouted in a loud voice, “Hey, this person has no rights to interfere during the examinations, right?”

The invigilator who had been standing nearby for quite some time turned his gaze in their direction and told Hogan, “Sir, please conduct yourself with dignity.”

Hogan glanced at the invigilators in the area. Although the other party was just an ordinary member of staff, not even a Knight, he indeed had no right to interfere in the examinees’ decisions. Therefore, he only glared at Fang Xingjian coldly as he spat out, “Wallowing in degeneration.”

After saying this, he flicked his sleeves and left, as though he did not want to see what Fang Xingjian would continue to do. He left the examination grounds immediately, making Dick, who was at the side, burst out in laughter.

[1] Used as a symbol of peace.

Chapter 33 Disciple

Fang Xingjian threw a baffled glance at Hogan's back before he continued to analyze the second sword technique.

Not long after, another sword technique appeared in his Techniques Column, namely Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth.

The Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique earlier required one to twist the body to the extreme, along with a high flexibility attribute, thus working towards the development of the body's potential. He was not sure if this Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth was a technique of the Nurturing Path or of the Training Path. From beginning to end, it was just one slashing movement after another. The only differences between the stances were in the channeling of the strength, and in the angles and use of each slash. Looking at the numerous inscriptions on the murals gave one a headache.

There were over ten other examinees who were also learning this sword technique, in deep thought as they stared at the first mural. There were some who shook their heads, wondering if they could also pick another sword technique to learn, just as Fang Xingjian had done. But at the same time, they were also worried that the other set of sword technique would be even harder, and that they would have wasted the past one hour spent on the current set.

On the other hand, everything seemed to be smooth sailing for Fang Xingjian. He only need to take one or two looks at the diagrams and explanations to be able to understand them.

However, this time around he did not take as little time as before, but stopped for a very long time before each mural. He used his longsword to imitate the movements, as if he was focusing on grasping this set of sword technique.

However, to the others, his slow movements still seemed

extremely fast. Before midnight, he had already gone through all the murals of the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth.

Along with the previous events, his actions were still seen as deliberate attempts to mystify others.

Just ten minutes before the time was up, whilst everyone was still practising hard, aiming to queue up for the assessment only at the very last moment, Fang Xingjian took up his longsword and headed for the room next door where the examiners were.

Ogden was astonished. ‘What is this fellow thinking? Is he crazy... Could it be that he has already mastered that set of sword technique?’ Thinking about it, he shook his head. ‘That’s impossible. Even Kaunitz is only halfway through, how could he have already mastered it? Moreover, he wasted an hour before this.’

‘Hmph, hmph. It must be that he has decided to give up, since the stress is too much to bear. Previously, Kaunitz was teaching him a lesson every single day, which led to him not daring to show his face in The School of Sword Arts. His will is very weak, so it’s nothing strange for him to be calling it quits now.

‘Such a good-for-nothing, putting his own talents to waste...’

Kaunitz also raised his head, looking at Fang Xingjian, bewildered. ‘There is no way that his talent is better than mine... But why did he go over so early? What is he thinking?’

‘But if this is the case, the chances of him passing the Prefectural Selection would be very slim.’

An invigilator raised his eyebrows. However, since Fang Xingjian was not flouting the rules by leaving early, he only asked customarily, “Are you going to the next room to be assessed? Are you sure?”

“Positive,” Fang Xingjian said, nodding.

Therefore, under everyone’s gazes of bewilderment, doubt,

despise and disdain, Fang Xingjian slowly made his way to where the seven examiners were.

In the room, the seven examiners were each seated on a chair. When they saw Fang Xingjian coming in, they all seemed very surprised.

Usually, in the third stage there would rarely be any examinees who would decide to come in earlier rather than queue up for their turn at the last possible moment.

A white-bearded examiner looked towards a member of staff at the side, mystified, and asked, "Is the time already up?"

The member of staff replied, "There's still another ten minutes."

The white-bearded old man looked towards Fang Xingjian with much interest, asking, "Chap, you still have another ten minutes. Why did you decide to come in? Why did you not spend the time outside? With ten minutes, you might even be able to learn an additional move."

The other examiners also looked at Fang Xingjian with curiosity. Only the main examiner, Huang Lin, had the corners of his lips curled up, revealing a mysterious smile.

Fang Xingjian replied, "Because I've already learnt it?"

"Learnt it?" the white-bearded old man asked in astonishment. "You said that you've learnt a set of sword technique on those walls within six hours?"

"Mmm." Fang Xingjian nodded and said, "Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth."

"How is that possible?" The white-bearded old man stood up in disbelief. "Do you know how long it would take an ordinary person to learn this set of sword technique? Half a year's time!"

"Even a person with the standard of a Knight would at least need a day to master this set of sword technique. And you're saying that

you've learnt it within six hours?"

The other examiners also started chattering between themselves in an instant, throwing all sorts of looks filled with suspicion and hostility towards Fang Xingjian, as if they were thinking of shredding him into pieces in the next moment.

Fang Xingjian was neither humble nor arrogant as he replied, "You'll see for yourselves after you allow me to demonstrate this set of sword technique once."

The white-bearded old man let out a frustrated laugh, saying, "Alright, alright, go ahead and demonstrate it once for us."

Fang Xingjian drew out his longsword, slashing up-down in the direction of the old man, all the while exuding a dominating aura. As he was displaying this slash, he felt as if the bones and muscles all over his body were being run over by a truck, every one of his muscles muscles aching terribly.

It was obvious that this set of sword technique required one to accumulate power from the muscles, bones and even the internal organs all over one's body. It also had high requirements for one's physical attributes and the toughness of the body.

Displaying one slash after another, the next move Fang Xingjian presented was the continuous sixteen slashes. Each of his slashes brought sword wind, making the air currents sweep through the whole room, like a tempest.

With each slash, Fang Xingjian's muscles turned increasingly red and hot, and his sweat increasingly and continuously turned into steam. It made him feel as if he had just run a few hundred kilometers.

Slash, slash, slash, slash, slash!

With each of Fang Xingjian's slashes, the examiners became more and more astonished, looking at him as if he were a monster.

The white-bearded old man in particular. With each display of

Fang Xingjian's slash, he stared with increasingly bigger eyes, until it looked as if his eyeballs were close to popping out. He pointed in disbelief at Fang Xingjian who had just finished his demonstration of the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth and said, "You... you... you... really learned it?"

The other examiners also stared in disbelief, looking at Fang Xingjian as if he were abnormal.

Seeing Fang Xingjian nodding, one of the examiners suddenly asked, "That's can't be right. Have you learned this sword technique before?"

"Mmm, that's a possibility."

"It's not as if there haven't been any precedents of exam questions being leaked."

"That's right, we'll need to investigate this matter thoroughly. Otherwise, if this really was the case, we would become a laughingstock."

At that moment all of the examiners started chattering, and the gazes directed at Fang Xingjian turned into looks of scrutiny and doubt.

This was all quite normal. When faced with such matters, most examiners would probably request for thorough checks to be performed in order to ensure the authenticity.

Fang Xingjian had long expected this, but he was not afraid to be put through any checks. It was because he was well aware of the complete process of the selection. His background in The School of Sword Arts was very simple, and in the worst case scenario, he would just be asked to learn another sword technique. It would be very simple to comply.

While most of the examiners were making a fuzz, each scrambling to say their thoughts on the matter, Huang Lin, who had not spoken a word all this time, finally smiled and said,

“Everyone, weren’t you all very curious before about the reason why I had given this fellow a perfect score in the second stage?”

After all, Huang Lin was a Conferred Knight who had gone through the second job transition, and thus his words obviously carried a lot of weight among the examiners. Everyone fell silent upon hearing his words.

Huang Lin revealed a mysterious smile as he looked at Fang Xingjian and asked, “Your Grizzly Bear Sword Technique is probably not just at level 10, right? It’s a pity that the Nurturing Path is focused on the body, improving the physique and strengthening one’s potential. That’s why I was the only one who noticed this.”

“What? His Grizzly Bear Sword Technique has broken through level 10?”

“He is truly a genius?”

“If that really is the case, then he’s a genius! No. A great genius!”

The examiners’ gazes towards Fang Xingjian seemed to burn, as if they had gathered around to look at a treasure. As for the theory Huang Lin had suggested, they would not doubt a Conferred Knight’s words.

Moreover, even if they did not perform a check on such matters, the truth would be revealed sooner or later either way, when Fang Xingjian eventually enrolled into the Knight Academy.

As for this matter, Fang Xingjian had been prepared long before having decided to reveal a part of his talent. After all, there was no way that a person who could reach the first level of a sword technique within a few hours’ time would only be equipped with a level 10 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

Therefore, he said in a calm voice, “Level 15.”

In that instance, he felt as if the gazes from the examiners around him were burning ten times more intensely than before.

Huang Lin coughed and calmly asked, “Do you already have a master? I’m referring to a master who would give you one-to-one direct guidance.”

Chapter 34 Potential

The implication was so clear that Fang Xingjian would have had to be a fool not to understand. Moreover, with his talents, having such a powerful person like Huang Lin to protect him was more than he could have asked for.

Fang Xingjian immediately half kneeled and said, “Master, please accept my bow.”

“Alright, alright.” Huang Lin laughed, his eyes filled with satisfaction as he looked at Fang Xingjian.

The examiners watching them from the side shook their heads and sighed with regret. Each and every one of them desired a disciple of Fang Xingjian’s calibre.

“Congratulations for accepting such a good disciple, Sir.”

“Sir has finally accepted another disciple after so many years.”

The white-bearded examiner laughed and shook his head, pointing at Huang Lin, “You’re good. No wonder you wouldn’t say a word when we asked why you gave him full marks for the second round. You had already thought of grabbing him as your disciple. Sigh, I’m feeling so regretful now. Why didn’t I see that his Grizzly Bear Sword Technique had passed Level 10?”

“Haha!” Huang Lin smiled and turned towards Fang Xingjian. “You are gifted, I will accept you as my disciple for now.” With that, he immediately turned solemn and said, “But I am extremely strict in my teachings. If you don’t fulfill my expectations, I will kick you out of the academy.”

Fang Xingjian showed no changes in his expression. “I’ll listen to your every word, Master.”

Huang Lin softened again, saying, “Mm, you may go back now. Come look for me after you’ve reported at the academy.”

This implied that Fang Xingjian had safely passed the Prefectural Selection. Truth be said, given his results, if he had not passed then no one else would have.

Fang Xingjian returned slowly, but stopped in his tracks. After releasing the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth, he had spotted a problem. There was an additional line of numbers at the bottom of his attributes.

Current potential: 123,300.

‘Wha... What is that?’

He wanted to research it when he got back, but remembering that this world had been digitized since god knew when, it had to be thorough in their knowledge regarding the Stats Window.

He turned around and asked, “Teacher, I have a question.”

Huang Lin nodded. “Speak. But I have to take charge of the examinations, so questions that take up too much time will have to be discussed next time.”

Fang Xingjian hurriedly asked, “Teacher, do you know what potential is?” He did not dare to say that it had appeared on his screen, so he asked indirectly.

Hearing that question, the seven examiners present looked at each other before bursting into laughter.

Seeing Fang Xingjian’s perplexed look, Huang Lin replied, “You are not of nobility, hence it is normal to not know this. You should have learnt it when you were at The School of Sword Arts. Nurturing Path is the term for the process of accumulating potential to develop one’s body and to enhance one’s physique, right?”

Seeing him nod, Huang Lin continued. “The potential you are talking about is accumulated through the Nurturing Path. Normally, you wouldn’t be able to feel it. Only once you have acquired the Training Path and once you’ve used your potential

would you be able to see it on your screen.”

All the examiners present had experienced it before. They nodded whilst listening. Huang Lin saw a hint of realization flash across Fang Xingjian’s face and chuckled, “Do you understand now? The Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth was a Training Path technique. You’ve just unlocked the Potential Indicator on the screen.”

“Hmph, trying to act smart with us? Ask us directly the next time you have a question and don’t beat around the bush.”

Even though Huang Lin was reprimanding him, he still reminded his student, with concern, “In martial arts, the Training Path is effective in enhancing one’s physical strength, but it uses up potential every time. When your attributes are between 10 and 19 points, exhausting 10,000 worth of potential would increase 1 point in a selected attribute. When the attributes are between 20 and 29 points, exhausting 20,000 worth of potential would increase 1 point in a selected attribute. From 30 points onwards, exhausting 30,000 worth of potential will increase 1 point in a selected attribute. Correspondingly, at every stage, when enough potential gained from the Training Path techniques is exhausted, you can add some points to a particular attribute, depending on which Training Path technique you practice.

“However, training under a situation where you have insufficient potential will cause bodily harm. When you are practicing, remember not to use up all your potential.”

“Your disciple understands. So the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth cultivates strength?”

“That’s right. The Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique cultivates flexibility.

Alright, you may take your leave.”

Fang Xingjian left the examination hall by another walkway.

From the beginning, the whole examination process could not not be seen by the other examinees.

He was directed by the staff along the way, and left the Knight Academy for Kirst.

Halfway through, he could not help but start practicing the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth. It was his first time acquiring a sword technique in the Training Path, and he was too curious about the differences between the Training Path and the Nurturing Path, as well as the profoundness behind the former.

Truth be told, it had been difficult for him to keep it in on the way out of the academy.

Displaying the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth, Fang Xingjian took a stride with every swing, and with every stride, the earth seemed to tremble. His energy gradually increased, and after sixteen steps, Fang Xingjian's energy soared throughout his body, and his muscles and bones shook. It was as if a deity had descended, and he seemed to have doubled in size.

Hu~~~

He exhaled gently. After Fang Xingjian stopped, a great amount of perspiration burst out from all of his pores, as if he had just stepped out of a sauna.

'Is this the Training Path? Like the blazing summer, honing one's physical body, triggering one's potential. The training of the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth is indeed extremely tough. It feels tens of times tougher than the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.'

Fang Xingjian only thought that during the process of practicing the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth his entire body seemed to have been torn apart and gone through a training like never before, especially the muscle fibres in his arms and the sides of his backbone.

After that, Fang Xingjian practiced the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth as he went on his way, and quickly found that every time he trained the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth, 10 potential points would be used up.

When Fang Xingjian was practicing for the twelfth time, the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth rose to level 2, and now each time he performed it 20 potential points would be depleted.

Fang Xingjian took big strides and swung his sword along the way, practicing the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth and hurrying home.

When he reached his rugged home, the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth had reached level 4. His clothes were all soaked in perspiration, he had bloodshot eyes and he looked like a cooked shrimp. Apparently, all his muscles, tendons and bones were emitting a large amount of heat, like a stove, due to the extreme training.

However, he did not stop, probably because the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth was the first Training Path technique he had learnt. Or because he had successfully become a Knight after passing the Prefectural Selection. Or because he had sworn in the powerful Huang Lin as his teacher, who had already gone through the second transition. Or because he felt that he had taken one step closer in his path of revenge. Whatever the reason, he was feeling a little excited tonight.

Feeling the perspiration all over his body, he stripped, revealing a toned body. Fang Xingjian followed up with another practice run of the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth.

He did this the entire night, coming back for practice after breakfast at The School of Sword Arts. Until late afternoon, his Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth had reached level 6. Each practice run exhausted 60 potential points now, and in all, he had used up more than 20,000 points' worth of potential. He now

had 36 points in strength, and to be able to increase an additional point to his strength, he would still need to expend more potential of less than 10,000 points in total.

Chapter 35 Wait

At this time, Fang Xingjian already had a general idea of what potential represented, and thus was able to better understand what an advantage he would have with his sword technique brought to perfection.

In fact, he had only been able to really appreciate the advantages of the level 30 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique and the level 20 Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique after officially enrolling in the Knight Academy.

It was not the additional attributes, neither the higher cultivation effects, nor their use in battles.

It was the fact that he gained ten times the potential compared to a level 10 sword technique.

When people trained their physical body to a certain degree, it was already difficult enough if they used normal training methods to raise their attributes, potential being the only way to maintain the increase in attributes.

Endlessly practicing the level 10 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique each and every day would only allow one to get a maximum of 50 potential points, and after reaching this point, no matter how much one trained, one would no longer reap any additional rewards. It was the limit of the level 10 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique.

And with a level 30 Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, coupled with Fang Xingjian's Sword Specialist specialty, the maximum potential he could attain from daily practice was 500 points. At that moment, he understood what the use of Sword Specialist specialty was. It was able to raise the potential obtained from Nurturing techniques.

Sword techniques of extremely high levels, coupled with the

specialities related to sword art, could create a gap up to ten times the difference.

And similar sword techniques, such as the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique and the Descent of Holy Light provided the same amount of potential. When one attained 500 points of potential from practicing the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, one would no longer be able to attain any additional potential via the Descent of the Holy Light. This goes to show that if one were to practice sword techniques of a similar nature, they would still only be able to raise only 500 points of potential in a day.

The higher the standard of the Nurturing technique, the higher the potential one could obtain. And the higher the standard of the Training technique, the higher the potential's consumption rate.

The more the potential, the higher the exhaustion, and the faster the rate of increase in one's attributes.

Which also meant that if Fang Xingjian were to alternate between training the techniques in the Nurturing Path and Training Path, the speed at which one could get stronger would be ten times faster than ordinary people.

A person with mediocre calibre would spend the whole morning practicing these three sword techniques but only receive 150 points in potential, and practicing the whole afternoon to exhaust the 150 points in potential. To exhaust 10,000 potential points to raise his attributes, one would need to spend up to two months.

On the other hand, after merely one day of practice, Fang Xingjian was already able to accumulate and exhaust two to three thousand points in potential; and to exhaust 10,000 potential points to raise his attributes, he would only require three to four days' time.

And the best thing was, since he practiced much more sword techniques than other people, while an ordinary person could practice three sets of level 10 sword techniques in the Nurturing

Path to get 150 points in potential, Fang Xingjian could practice 10 sets or even 20 sets to attain four to five thousand points in potential.

This allowed him to pick up the pace of training his sword art to improve his physique, accumulate potential and also to temper his physical body and stimulate the amassed potential.

Although Fang Xingjian had not fully grasped this idea at the moment, he was already very excited to get his hands on a technique in the Training Path. During the time they were waiting for the results of the Prefectural Selection to be released, he decided to fully grasp the time to train his Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth and Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique.

At the same time, he would also continue practicing the other sword techniques of the Nurturing Path, including the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique, to amass even more potential.

He dived into his sword practice fanatically just like that. He did a calculation and realized that with the sword techniques he had at the moment, he could receive 3500 points in potential daily. This meant that theoretically speaking, when he practiced the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth at a strength of 30 to 40 points, he would be able to exhaust 30,000 points in potential daily, and hence be able to raise a bit of his strength attribute once every nine days.

Upon reaching 40 points in his strength attribute, he would be able to receive an increase once every 11 days.

‘Very good...’ Fang Xingjian revealed a satisfied smile, ‘This rate of improvement is even faster than I had expected. After enrolling at the academy, I will be able to pick up even more varieties of techniques in the Nurturing Path and Training Path, and therefore increase the rate even further.’

Compared to an ordinary person, or even to other talented people, Fang Xingjian’s attributes seemed as if they were

purchased at wholesale.

After a night of practice, he dragged his exhausted body to The School of Sword Arts for breakfast the next morning.

However, just when he had taken a few bites, Ogden's sarcastic voice rang out from beside him.

"Oh? Isn't this the great genius from our school, Fang Xingjian?" Ogden smiled and said, "Haha, how was it? You'll definitely be able to pass the Prefectural Selection this time around?"

Seeing that Fang Xingjian did not pay him any heed, his face turned grim and he said, "I'm sure you guys are not aware, this great genius here had left earlier during the final stage and had even learnt two techniques by himself. Hmph... he really thinks he is some ultimate genius."

Fang Xingjian did not bother about him and Ogden started to exaggerate things, saying how Fang Xingjian had tried to put up a strong front in the third stage, how he landed himself in a hopeless situation, and how he eventually could not take the pressure and gave up.

At that moment, the leader of School of Sword Arts, Kyle, walked in. All the disciples stood up and shouted their greetings, "Teacher!"

"Don't be nervous, today's the day the results for the Prefectural Selection are released. The academy will inform each school by sending the results slip. I'm here to check your results." His brows were slightly knitted as he looked at Fang Xingjian and said, "Xingjian, is what Ogden said true? You learned two sword techniques in the final stage and even left earlier?"

Fang Xingjian finished the last bite of the black bread, nodded, and did not say anything.

Kyle shook his head and sighed, "Forget it, you've just picked up the sword not longer ago and this is only your first Prefectural

Selection. It's nothing to feel some anxiety. With your talent, so long as you work hard in your training, you'll have a big chance in next year's Prefectural Selection."

Fang Xingjian nodded, stood up and said, "Teacher, I'll make a move first."

"You're not staying to wait for the results?"

"There's nothing to see." Fang Xianjian would definitely pass, so he could not be bothered to wait here for the results like Ogden and the rest. If he had the time, he would rather spend it practicing the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth and Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique.

Ogden stared at Fang Xingjian's departing back view and gave a cold sneer, "Tsk, you don't dare to stay behind for fear of embarrassing yourself?"

Thereafter, everyone from The School of Sword Art waited at the training ground, but no one was in the mood for training. Regardless of if it was the Eldest Martial Brother Ogden, or Second Martial Brother Lambert, they were were all anxiously waiting to find out the results and turned their heads towards the direction of the door every now and then.

Suddenly, a student shouted loudly, "It's here, it's here!"

The whole group of them dashed towards the door but only to realize that it was merely a passing peddler. The examinee said, embarrassed, "Sorry, I've got it wrong."

Ogden gave him a harsh glare and said, "It's fine, it's fine. Let's wait a little longer, it should be here soon."

On the other hand, in the lounge of Tresia Academy, the place was decorated with lanterns and banners, full of festivity.

The teachers in the academy were chatting amongst themselves, but at the same time, they had kept some of their attention towards the direction of the door.

Kaunitz was like a very big spotlight then, attracting everyone's attention. The young beauty who was originally from The School of Sword Arts was grabbing onto his arm and asking excitedly, "Kaunitz, you were saying that Master Huang Lin was full of admiration for you during the Prefectural Selection?"

"Mmm." Kaunitz said proudly, "Master Huang Lin had said that the powers I displayed in the second stage were quite good, and after I demonstrated the sword technique in the third stage, he gave me encouragement, asking me to continue to work hard in my training so that I can serve the Empire."

Vivian's arm hugged tighter around Kaunitz and asked, "So you'll probably be the Prefectural Champion this time around?"

"There's a possibility," Kaunitz said. "But Robert has gone already gone through the first transition after all, and has attained extraordinary powers. Although becoming the Prefectural Champion might be a little difficult, getting second place should be no problem at all."

Chapter 36 Namelist

In the lounge of Tresia Knight Academy, someone walked over to Kaunitz. It was the person who had made a bet with Hogan that Fang Xingjian would not be able to get into the top five, Dick.

Instructor Dick looked at Kaunitz as he smiled and said, “I heard that you had performed extremely well in the Prefectural Selection held this time around and that you were the top amongst the younger generation. Seems like in the future, you’ll be one of Kirst’s leading figures.”

“You are too kind.” Kaunitz said humbly, “Fei Yang Academy’s Barbara, Shadow Moon Academy’s Boris and Aristocrat Academy’s Ferdinand are also very strong...”

“But you are the best amongst them, is that not true?” Dick patted Kaunitz on the shoulders and said, “I think very highly of you. You’ll definitely be the one to lead our Kirst’s Knights to bring about brilliant results in the Regional Selection a few years down the road.”

Kaunitz lowered his head, bowed slightly and said, “Thank you for your compliment.”

“No need to be so rigid. After you enroll in the academy, I will be your teacher and in the future, we will all be comrades.” Dick said, “I have another purpose for my visit this time around. There are some societies in the academy and I represent Kirst Condor Society to invite you to join us.”

Kaunitz’s gaze sharpened. Kirst Condor Society could be said to be a community that all aristocrats enrolled in Kirst Royal Knight Academy must join.

This was a community where aristocratic Knights built alliances and supported each other.

Hearing Dick’s request, Kaunitz felt a little excited as well.

‘Is it really because of my excellent results that the people from the society came to approach me directly and do not require me to approach them myself like the others have to?’

Kaunitz nodded, reached out his hand and said, “I can’t wait.”

Dick smiled and grasped Kaunitz’s hand, “Welcome.”

At that moment, a commotion broke out in the crowd.

“It’s here, it’s here.”

“It’s the person sending the results slip.”

Dick took a look in the distance before smiling and patting Kaunitz on the shoulders as he said, “Go on, this moment belongs to you.”

Kaunitz nodded his head and a slight flush of excitement flashed across his face. He looked to the Vivian who was beside him and said, “Wait for me here, I’ll be back in a while.”

At the entrance, a member of staff from KIRST Royal Knight Academy held onto a stack of documents and handed it over to the principal of Tresia Knight Academy.

The headmaster of Tresia Knight Academy was an old man with white and sparse hair. He wore a black tuxedo and had a charm like only those ancient aristocrats had. His elegant appearance made him seem like a gentleman rather than a Warrior.

And he was also the current head of Tresia Clan, Kaunitz’s father.

Receiving the results slip sent by the academy, the old man smiled as he looked towards Kaunitz and said, “Our Tresia Clan will finally have another Knight from this year’s Prefectural Selection. This brings honor to our clan and also serves to show the prosperity of the Empire and to our military strength. Here, let us make a toast to the longevity of the Empire.”

Saying that, he raised the wine glass in his hand. The rest of the

people followed.

“Long live the Empire!”

“Long live!”

After finishing the toast, the head of Tresia Clan said to Kaunitz, “Kaunitz, my youngest son, come take a look at this results slip. This is what you deserve after the more than ten years of tough training you have gone through.”

Kaunitz was long since ready to walk up. This setting was intended to boost his reputation in the clan from the start and was specially arranged so that Kirst’s aristocrats would become familiar with him.

Kaunitz smiled and received the document, slowly opening and throwing a glance at it.

Amongst the crowd, Vivian looked happily at Kaunitz, who was on the stage. She looked around at the aristocrats surrounding them, looked at their luxurious clothings, extravagant food, lavish decorations and the numerous maids and servants around, she started to feel very excited.

‘This is the life that I want, to be a character in the upper society. This is something that I’ll never get in The School of Sword Arts.

‘While Kaunitz is a bit boring, he is considered quite a good partner. It’s just that his family matters are slightly more complicated. But so long as he can get me into Tresia Knight Academy, it’s sufficient. If I’m here...’

However, in the next moment, Vivian saw that Kaunitz’s face suddenly turned grim and a tinge of fury flashed across his eyes.

“What is going on?” He looked at the person who despatched the letter and asked, “Is there some mistake with this namelist?”

“What’s wrong?”

“What happened?”

A commotion broke out in the crowd below. Seeing this, the clan head placed his hand on Kaunitz's shoulder and said, "Stay calm."

"But..." Kaunitz had wanted to continue, but he felt a pressure coming from his father's palm, causing him to be unable to move.

After taking the namelist, the clan head's brows twitched, but he still remained calm and said, "Placed in tenth in this year's Prefectural Selection, Aristocrat Academy, Carter."

"Placed in ninth..."

As the clan head announced the names on the list, everyone tensed up. There were even some students from Tresia Academy who had participated in the Prefectural Selection but did not get good results, staring intensely at the clan head. They seemed to think that their names might appear on the list by a stroke of luck.

"Placed in sixth, Fei Yang Knight Academy, Barbara."

"Placed in fifth, Shadow Moon Academy, Boris."

"Placed in fourth, Aristocrat Academy, Ferdinand."

"Placed in third..." The clan head paused, but continued to say with a straight face, "Tresia Knight Academy, Kaunitz."

After he finished this line, everyone present glanced at Kaunitz in astonishment, as if they were all shocked that he would be third. The person in first place would definitely be Robert, but then who would be second? To think that he had robbed Kaunitz of his glory.

When Kaunitz heard his own name, his face turned pale and grim.

The clan head continued, "Placed in second, Robert Abel."

"What?"

"How could this be?"

"Robert Abel, who had gone through the first transition, is only placed second? Then who is first?"

“Could it be that there was someone else in the Prefectural Selection who had already gone through the first transition as well?”

The clan head paused for a moment, as if he was questioning the person in first place was, but after giving it some thought, the name was still not familiar to him. He continued to say, “The Prefectural Champion in this year’s Prefectural Selection, School of Sword Arts, Fang Xingjian.”

“Fang Xingjian? Who’s that?”

“Someone from The School of Sword Arts? Wasn’t it already a declining school?”

An aristocrat lady walked to Vivian and asked curiously, “Vivian, weren’t you from The School of Sword Arts previously? Do you know Fang Xingjian?”

“Fang Xingjian?” Vivian jerked her head, looked at the lady and asked, “Did he say that the one who came first was Fang Xingjian? Fang Xingjian from The School of Sword Arts?”

The lady was stunned for a moment before she replied, “That’s right, do you know him?”

“How is this possible?” Vivian was stunned and she said, “How can Fang Xingjian be the Prefectural Champion?”

On the stage, Kaunitz gave a cold snort, and ignoring everyone’s words of congratulations, he dashed out of the lounge and headed for The School of Sword Arts.

Chapter 37 Joyfulness and Sadness

In The School of Sword Arts, most of the students were waiting for the arrival of the Prefectural Selection's namelist.

Ogden paced around the courtyard, throwing glances occasionally towards the entrance's direction.

'I've already learned the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique. All three of my basic sword techniques have reached level 10, and my performance in the Prefectural Selection was still acceptable this time.

'In the second stage, there was still an examiner who smiled at me.'

'My results for the second stage should be pretty good. After all, aside from Kaunitz, the others didn't perform that well in the third stage.

'After factoring all of these things in, I should still have a chance to pass the Prefectural Selection.'

If Ogden really did not have any hint of passing the Prefectural Selection, he would not be so anxious. Instead, he would have given up all hope.

However under these circumstances, while his chances were not high, he still held onto a bit of his wishful thinking.

'Maybe, I've passed it?'

Seeing how he was pacing around nonstop, Kyle could not help but call out, "Alright, stop pacing around. Look at how anxious you are. No matter how anxious you are now, the results will not change."

"Mmm." Ogden sat down, but his right leg was still shaking nonstop. He would knit his brows every now and then, as if he was thinking about some matters. Kyle smiled silently when he saw

this.

Finally, when the The School of Sword Arts' atmosphere became filled with tension, Kirst Royal Knight Academy's staff arrived at last. Everyone present stood up in agitation on noticing the envelope in his hand.

Even though tens of eyes were fixated upon him, the person who had made the dispatch did not fall into panic. He had seen too many similar situations.

He shouted, "May I ask where is The School of Sword Arts' Headmaster?"

"That'll be me." Kyle walked over, cupped his hands towards the deliveryman, and said, "Thank you for your trouble."

After receiving the envelope, he slowly opened it while being the focus of many expectant, curious, and nervous looks.

While Kyle was looking at the namelist, he appeared very normal at first, but not long afterwards, he looked stunned. He brought the namelist closer to his face and took a closer look, as if he could not believe what was written on it.

Ogden's heart leapt, 'Could it be that I've made it? Could it be that I've made it?'

Kyle looked towards the deliveryman and asked, "This namelist is the correct one, right?"

Of course, the deliveryman had not seen the contents of the namelist before. However, he had encountered similar questions every year until he had forgotten how many times he had answered them. He smiled and said, "There's no way that there would be a mistake."

Kyle blinked his eyes, looked at the namelist in his hands, and suddenly smiled.

Ogden was waiting on the side and felt increasingly restless when

he saw Kyle's series of expressions. Finally, he could not help but ask, "Teacher Kyle, so how is it?"

"Let me announce the names in the top ten." Kyle shook his head and said, "In tenth place for this year's Prefectural Selection is Aristocrat Academy's Carter.

"In ninth place is City Guards Institution's Jack.

"In eighth place is Tresia Knight Academy's Zhou Yong.

"In seventh place, Anthony.

"In sixth place, Fei Yang Knight Academy, Barbara.

"In fifth place, Shadow Moon Academy, Boris.

"In fourth place, Aristocrat Academy, Ferdinand.

"In third place, Tresia Knight Academy's Kaunitz.

"In second place is Robert."

When he had announced the name for second place, everyone looked at Kyle in disbelief. Ogden's face turned grim as if he had lost all of his energy, but a vague hint of hope was still hidden in his eyes.

'I can't possibly be the Prefectural Champion. It's not possible... but, could it be? Maybe my performance this time around was what the invigilators were looking for, and thus first place was given to me?'

Lambert let out a sigh as he turned to leave, knowing full well that it was not possible for him to place first. He wanted to find a place for some peace and quiet.

Under Ogden's gaze, which was filled with both desperation and hope, Kyle smiled and announced the last name.

"In first place, The School of Sword Arts, Fang Xingjian."

"What?!" Ogden was the first to shout. "How can this be possible?! I don't believe this. I don't believe this! How can Fang

Xingjian be the Prefectural Champion? I started practicing martial arts at the age of eight, and every day and night I've been putting in so much effort in my training for years. He has only joined The School of Sword Arts for such a short time, and it's only been half a year!"

Kyle frowned and said, "That's enough, this is the truth. Stop embarrassing yourself."

"This is not possible. How could Fang Xingjian defeat Kaunitz? And Robert, he had already completed the first transition. How could Fang Xingjian be more outstanding than him?" Ogden shouted, "Teacher, let me take a look at the namelist."

Kyle's brows twitched, and a slight bit of anger was hidden in the corner of his eyes. "What did you say?" The other party's words were obviously suggesting that Kyle was suspected of spouting rubbish.

Ogden immediately realized that he had blurted out something he should not have. He knew that Kyle would not do such a silly thing, but he was too agitated to control his own emotions. He spoke in a softer tone, "Teacher, let me take a look to see how I performed."

Kyle gave a cold snort and threw the namelist over. Ogden fumbled to catch it, and the first thing he did was to visually confirm Fang Xingjian's name was where the first place's name was written. He then scrolled down the list and started to look for his own name.

In forty-third place, The School of Sword Arts, Lambert.

In sixty-ninth place, The School of Sword Arts, Ogden.

He fell back two steps, and he felt all the energy from his body slowly seeping away.

Kyle shook his head and asked a student who was on the side, "Where is Xingjian? Go look for him. The namelist is already here,

so why is he not here yet?”

“Right...right...”

A few students dashed out and shouted agitatedly, “Martial Brother Xingjian, Martial Brother Xingjian, you’ve become the Prefectural Champion!”

Lambert also suddenly jerked his head around, mumbling to himself in disbelief, “Fang Xingjian achieved first place?” He had thought the other party could pass the Prefectural Selection, but he had never thought he would become the Prefectural Champion.

In the courtyard, many students were also very excited, and the scene became very noisy.

“How did he do that?”

“Didn’t Kaunitz previously beat him up everyday?”

“Did he have some connection with one of the examiners? If not, how could he have passed having only spent half a year in The School of Sword Arts. How could he have passed and reached first place?” Someone questioned.

Everyone in the courtyard displayed different expressions. Some of them felt there was something weird going on while others were surprised. Some could not understand while others were puzzled. It was obvious that they all found it a bit hard to believe that Fang Xingjian had clinched the Prefectural Champion’s position.

Kyle shook his head and smiled. He knew that no one would dare cheat in the Prefectural Selection. Also, the examiners in the academy had deeper insights and a higher level of cultivation than his own, so a mistake was unlikely.

Right when everyone in the courtyard was immersed in a complicated atmosphere, the doors to The School of Sword Arts once again opened and Kaunitz walked in holding his longsword. He looked at a student and asked, “Where is Fang Xingjian?”

Under Kaunitz's heavy stare, the student felt uneasy all over and said nervously, "One of the Martial...Martial Brothers went to look for him. However, Martial Brother Fang Xingjian has had his breakfast. Usually, he will only be back at noon."

"This fellow...he doesn't even stay in the school on the day the results are released?" The flames in Kaunitz's eyes burned even stronger. He found a random spot to sit down and said coolly, "Then, I'll wait here for him."

After seeing this scene, many students revealed a gloating expression at someone else's misfortune.

"There's going to be a show to watch. The third place in the Prefectural Selection bashing up the first place?"

"Hehehe, the Prefectural Selection is not particular about one's battle powers, and it mainly focuses on one's potential, talent, and foundation. However, it's going to look pretty bad when the third place beats up the first place."

"Kaunitz is really infuriated to have his spot snatched by Fang Xingjian this time."

While watching this scene, Ogden's gaze also lit up as he headed towards Kaunitz.

Kyle frowned and asked, "Kaunitz, why are you looking for Xingjian?"

Chapter 38 KnockOut With One Sword

Facing Kyle's question, Kaunitz said, "It's nothing much. Fang Xingjian came first in the Prefectural Selection. This is recognized by all the examiners, of course I have no disputes since it shows that he is a talent blessed by heavens. The reason why I'm here is of course to seek guidance in sword arts.

"I've yet to master the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, Eagle Sword Technique and the Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique."

Kyle frowned. While he knew that Kaunitz would definitely be furious and would adopt a hostile attitude towards Fang Xingjian, when Kaunitz puts it this way and Fang Xingjian was not around at the moment, there was nothing much he could say.

However, Kyle had made up his mind that should the two of them clash, he would definitely protect Fang Xingjian. After all, he was The School of Sword Arts' student. How could he be allowed to be bullied after snatching the first place in the Prefectural Selection?

Ogden however, had walked up to Kaunitz and said, "Young Master Kaunitz, I wonder what trickery Fang Xingjian used, to think that he snatched your ranking.

"We're all witnesses to him being beaten up like a dog by you for over ten consecutive days previously.

"How could someone of this calibre clinch the first place in the Prefectural Selection? This Prefectural Selection..."

"Shut your trap." Kaunitz threw a glare at Ogden and said coldly, "Since when was the authority of the Empire's selections something that a good-for-nothing like you could challenge?"

Kaunitz's words made Ogden so infuriated that his face turned red, but he eventually swallowed it down. He could only stay at the

side and silently cursed, 'Fang Xingjian, you're dead meat. This time around, Kaunitz is really infuriated. You've offended someone from the Tresia Clan, so what if you have become a Knight?

'I'd like to see how you're going to survive in Kirst in the future.'

After about half an hour, Vivian, who was attending the gathering at the Tresia Clan, also walked into The School of Swords Arts in her gown. She nodded at Kyle in greeting and walked up to Kaunitz.

Seeing how Kaunitz was acting like a childish kid, while she was a bit annoyed, she went up and asked with a concerned look, "Kaunitz, are you alright?"

"Of course, what could be wrong with me? My condition is at its best yet." Kaunitz said furiously, "The reason I'm here is to just clear up some things."

The atmosphere in The School of Sword Arts became increasingly gloomy. While some of the students had initially felt agitation and excitement upon knowing that someone from their school had clinched the first place in the Prefectural Selection, they could only stand at the side now, feeling at a loss as they looked at the few people in front of them.

Some students wanted to practice their sword, but were forced to stop as they felt uneasy amidst the gloomy atmosphere.

Seeing this scene, Kyle frowned, clapped his hands and said, "Alright, alright, what are you guys up to today? In the end, the Prefectural Selection is each individual's problem to handle, what is it to you?"

"Are you guys done with today's assignment? If not, why are you all just standing there?"

"All of you better go practice your sword now."

The many students who were feeling at a loss in the gloomy

atmosphere suddenly felt as if they had been granted great amnesty. Each of them walked up to the training ground and started their sword practice.

Kaunitz seemed unaffected by this as he stared hard towards the direction of the main entrance, waiting for Fang Xingjian's return.

The students who went out to search for Fang Xingjian obviously came back empty-handed. How would they ever think of looking for him in a heap of ruins which had gone through a fire? Therefore, everyone only saw Fang Xingjian walking into The School of Sword Arts nonchalantly at noon.

Seeing Fang Xingjian's appearance, everyone who was waiting immediately stood up and stared at Fang Xingjian, as if they were looking at some rare animal.

Fang Xingjian threw a glance in their direction and then headed for the canteen directly. His original intention was to come back for lunch.

Kaunitz blocked his way and said, "Do you know that you got the first place in the Prefectural Selection?"

"Oh?" Fang Xingjian knew that with his performance in the third stage, there would be no problems for him to get the first place in the Prefectural Selection. Thus, he was not surprised. He merely nodded and said, "I know now. Thank you for telling me."

Hearing Fang Xingjian's thanks, Kaunitz's fury flared up even more. Once again, he blocked the path of Fang Xingjian who was moving forward and said, "Fight me."

"Not interested."

Kyle also advised from the distance, "Kaunitz, Fang Xingjian didn't start sword training long ago, why are you trying to bully someone weaker than yourself? It'll be better if you guys have a showdown after learning in the academy together."

Kaunitz of course could not wait until then. Seeing how Fang

Xingjian wanted to continue towards the canteen, he said furiously, “Are you scared?”

Fang Xingjian did not stop in his tracks. He only had four and a half years to live, why would he waste his time on a sixteen year old immature kid like Kaunitz?

Ogden shouted, “Fang Xingjian, are you a man? Do you only know how to hide? You’ve already been hiding for three months. Are you planning to avoid Kaunitz every time you see him in the future?”

“Let me tell you, if you’re still thinking of running away today, in the future, whenever you see Kaunitz, you’ll need to keep out of his way and never appear before Kaunitz again, nor appear in KIRST Royal Academy.

“Let me tell you...”

Before Ogden could finish his words, his eyes bulged, his mouth opened so big that one could stuff a duck’s egg into it, and he stared in Fang Xingjian’s direction, frightened.

Before him, Kaunitz had already dashed up and thrust his sword towards Fang Xingjian’s shoulder, unable to wait any longer. This thrust was like a dragon, displaying the full strength of his Chaotic Strike. Kaunitz’s muscles, bones and organs were all activated as power channeled through them, bursting out the full powers of his strength of 30 points. Under the activation of his full agility of 30 points, his muscles contracted and expanded fiercely, channeling all the strength to the tip of the sword.

It was like a comet had flown across the sky, releasing an air explosion with a loud rumble, smashing towards Fang Xingjian’s shoulder.

Facing this attack, Fang Xingjian turned, twisted his waist and drew his sword. His actions were all very clean as his longsword was like a comet smashing into the moon, sending Kaunitz’s sword

flying. He then smashed the blade on Kaunitz's chest.

With a bang, the sword sent Kaunitz flying five to six meters back. Kaunitz had wanted to stand up, but felt numbness in his chest as he stared coldly at Fang Xingjian. Two seconds later, he turned limp and fell unconscious.

With Fang Xingjian's single attack knocking out Kaunitz, everyone in the courtyard turned hysterical.

Ogden was still pointing at Fang Xingjian in a daze, maintaining the posture he had before his words were cut off. This was until Fang Xingjian knocked out Kaunitz with one blow, after which he glared at him harshly, sending off the aura he had cultivated from the training in Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth which was like a towering mountain charging towards Ogden's direction.

Ogden was so frightened that he retreated two steps. Fang Xingjian said coldly, "Trash."

Ogden immediately turned red with fury, panting heavily as if he would draw his sword at any time. But all the way until Fang Xingjian had entered the canteen, he was unable to even take one step forward.

Fang Xingjian's strike earlier was like a flash of lightning, constantly replaying in his mind.

Kyle and Lambert also received a shock as they looked at Fang Xingjian as if they were looking at a stranger.

The move the other party had used was obviously one from the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique, but compared to how it was during their usual training, it was more than ten times faster and harsher.

Kyle seemed to have straightened out his thoughts and he suddenly laughed out loud, "Excellent... Excellent, hahahaha." After saying this, he ignored the crowd of people who were in a frenzy and followed Fang Xingjian to the canteen.

On the other side, Vivian stood on the spot blankly. She took a

look at Kaunitz who was surrounded by the crowd, and then looked towards Fang Xingjian, who was heading towards the canteen, her mouth slightly agape and her mind completely blank. At the next moment, her face twisted as if she was a female ghost who was filled with resentment.

“Instant knockout?”

“It’s an instant knockout?”

“How could it be an instant knockout?”

Chapter 39 Enrolment

Fang Xingjian ignored the astonishment of those present as he was short on time, and so was not able to care about such things concerning his reputation.

Therefore, he continued to act as if nothing had happened. He went into the canteen, collected the milk, salad and black bread from the kitchen helper and started eating. These were considered quite a spread for him now.

It had also been a long time since Kyle had eaten at the canteen. He collected a set of food and sat in front of Fang Xingjian. Seeing how the other party was engrossed in his food, he smiled and said, "Say... when you have practiced in the school previously, you've held back, haven't you?"

Fang Xingjian did not even raise his head and replied, "Yes."

Kyle continued to ask, "Then can you tell me what level your Grizzly Bear Sword Technique is at now?"

After this issue, everyone would definitely gradually learn the truth, and Fang Xingjian had no intention of hiding it. He answered straightforwardly, "Level 15. I've perfected it."

Pssst. Kyle took in a sharp breath of cold air. What was the concept of someone having reached level 15 in the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique? This was a genius amongst geniuses, and in the Empire, only one would appear in decades or even centuries. He had never expected to encounter such a person.

Kyle said, "It's no wonder. With your talent, the Regional Selection would be no problem for you. However, you must still be careful during the National Selection."

Fang Xingjian had not that even thought that with the talent he had displayed, Kyle would still warn him to be careful during the National Selection. He asked in surprise, "Is the National Selection

so tough?”

Kyle shook his head and replied bitterly, “Do you know how many people in the Empire have been training without a sense of day or night? Thousands of people enters the Prefectural Selection and ten of them are chosen to be Knights; about one to two hundred Knights enters the Regional Selection, and the top ten are chosen again.

“And even if those who passed the Regional Selection are not comparable to you, the difference wouldn’t be too big.

“There are even old monsters who have been training for decades or centuries, freaks whose talent are no weaker than yours, and aristocrats from reputable backgrounds with access to resources that are hundreds or thousands of times more than yours.

Putting these people together to compete for the top ten spots, how intense do you think the competition would be? Moreover, the National Selection is held only once every three years, but only the top ten are selected. There are many strong people who are left behind to compete in the next National Selection.”

Kyle sighed and said, “That is the stage which belongs to the people at the pinnacle of each generation.”

Fang Xingjian nodded and finished the last bit of his bread, before he raised his head and said, “I’ll be attending KIRST Royal Knight Academy and will probably not be able to continue helping out with the matters in The School of Sword Arts.”

What rubbish are you talking about? After going there, how could you still bother yourself with the insignificant work here?” Kyle grinned and said, “I had thought of pulling you to join The School of Sword Arts, but never thought that you would suddenly soar up into the skies, progressing even faster than I’d imagined.”

Fang Xingjian said seriously, “No matter what, you are the one who brought me true enlightenment on my path of

swordsmanship. I'm very thankful."

"Why are you being so serious?" Kyle made nothing of it and said, "You paid the money, I teach you stuff, it's just so simple. Hehe, do you know that I accept tens of students each year, but there are less than five who still come back to visit me?"

"That's true." Fang Xingjian said, "Then I'll be taking my leave."

"Don't forget to report at the academy tomorrow."

Kyle looked at Fang Xingjian's departing back view, inclined his head and thought to himself, 'I keep getting the feeling that something's off about this guy's character.'

Half an hour later, another member of staff from the Royal Academy came to The School of Sword Arts to look for Kyle.

...

Kirst Royal Academy, archives.

Huang Lin looked at the record in his hands and a hint of a smile broke out on his face. Written on the record was all sorts of information related to Fang Xingjian, all the way from half a year ago. Even the period where he was recovering from his injuries in the fishing village was recorded.

'Mysterious background?' Huang Lin was indifferent to this. 'But the world of the Empire is vast and His Majesty's generosity is as vast as the mountains and seas, such that he would even take in demons from another dimension. While I'm not comparable to His Majesty, why would I not be willing to accept a genius with an unknown background?'

'To be able to bring the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique to level 15 in only half a year's time, and it might be possible that level 15 is not his limit yet.'

An unfathomable smile hung on Huang Lin's face. At the same time, he sealed up the record and switched it with a file he had

prepared earlier which indicated a clean background.

The academy would collect the records of everyone who had passed the Prefectural Selection each year and submit it to the Royal Knight Association for their recording. If there was anything suspicious, weird, or if the association felt that something was off, the Empire's higher management would order for a secret investigation to be conducted.

However, Huang Lin knew that should Fang Xingjian's situation be reported, what awaited him would be the various aggressive and ferocious wide-opened mouths, as well as the greedy gazes. Coming from the point of one who valued talent, he chose to keep Fang Xingjian's distinguished talents a secret for now.

'To reach level 15 in half a year's time, it really is too attention-attracting. How many Dong Fangling will there be in the world?' Huang Lin thought to himself.

At that moment, a figure entered the archives and stopped before Huang Lin.

"Lord, the task is completed. I've given Kyle a reminder. He's not likely to be too meddlesome."

"Mmm, so long as the people in the Imperial Capital have not noticed anything, I'm still able to handle Kirst's aristocrats."

...

The next day, Fang Xingjian had his breakfast at The School of Sword Arts and reported at Kirst Royal Knight Academy. Although he was despised by the guards due to his clothes, after he reported his name, their gazes had turned into those of fawning.

"Lord Fang Xingjian, this will be the classroom where you guys will be gathering at." One of the guards obligingly brought Fang Xingjian into a classroom.

Fang Xingjian gave a casual glance and discovered that he was the last one to arrive. The other nine Knights were already seated in

the classroom.

Coming from the aristocratic clans in the city, Kaunitz, Fei Yang Knight Academy's Barbara, and Aristocrat Knight Academy's Ferdinand were naturally seated together.

Behind them, tenth place Carter and eighth place Zhou Nan were like attendants.

Amongst the top ten places in the Prefectural Selection, those from the aristocratic clans had taken up five spots. This obviously showed the powers of the Empire's aristocrats.

Shadow Moon Academy's Boris sat alone in a corner. Other than Robert, he was the only one who had belonged to a faction which specialised in bare-handed martial arts. After all, the Empire's major factions rarely sent their most outstanding inheritors to the Empire.

City Guards Institution's Jack and the unaffiliated Anthony were considered commoners who rose by their own efforts.

As for the previous head of Tyrant Fist Dojo, Robert, he was seated with both legs on the table. When he saw Fang Xingjian, he revealed his teeth to him, showing a challenging smile. It was obvious that he was extremely pissed off that Fang Xingjian had clinched the Prefectural Champion this time around.

Seeing Fang Xingjian's appearance, fire lit up in Kaunitz's eyes, as if he wished to tear the other party into pieces.

The others' gazes were all filled with curiosity and guard. Most of them had received the news that the other party could defeat Kaunitz in one blow and was someone with powers they should not be holding in contempt.

Jack from the City Guards Institution laughed out and waved at Fang Xingjian. Fang Xingjian also naturally walked over and sat down.

Jack was a man about 30 years of age, with a full beard. He

greeted Fang Xingjian passionately after he had sat down, “You must be Fang Xingjian, right? My boss Hogan has mentioned your name quite a few times these past few days.

“My name is Jack, haha, after participating in the Prefectural Selections for six consecutive years, I’ve finally got in.”

He then pointed at Anthony and said, “This is Anthony from Uranlis.”

Chapter 40 Goal

Jack said, “Anthony has been touring Uranlis and only returned this past month to enter the Prefectural Selection.”

Uranlis? Traces of killing intent flashed intensely in Fang Xingjian’s eyes. Was Uranlis not the country that the Mage Association governed, and was it not also the country that currently allied with the five great nations of Earth, exchanging resources and skills?

And was the Black Mage King not one of the three greatest Mage Kings, the true ruler behind Uranlis’ governing body?

Therefore once he heard the news, Fang Xingjian took his own initiative to shake hands with Anthony as he introduced himself, “Hi, my name is Fang Xingjian.”

Anthony replied in a friendly manner, “During this year’s Prefectural Selection, your name and reputation were like the sounds of thunder piercing the ears. Please take care of me in the future.”

Fang Xingjian asked, “You just returned?”

“Yup, I was in Uranlis before I arrived here.”

Fang Xingjian made small talk with Anthony for two to three sentences, and he nonchalantly asked, “I heard that the Black Mage King of the Mage Association just accepted a disciple?”

“Mhm, yeah. I just received this news recently. The new disciple seems to be a commoner, and no one has ever seen him before. However, since he could become the Black Mage King’s disciple, he’s really incomparably lucky.” He was different from those in the Empire who had their own perceptions towards Uranlis. As someone who had lived there before, Anthony was clearly more rational. “You all better not think that all these Mages are all swindlers, using illusion techniques and sleight of hand magicians.

“In reality, the Mage Association in Uranlis is exceptionally powerful. The three Mage Kings, especially, are much stronger than even the majority of the other countries’ Knights.” In his speech, he was already conservative in his estimate of the power of the Mage Kings.

“Even more terrifying than the Knights of other countries?” Jack, who was a City Guard asked. “Are you serious? In the amount of time it takes them to channel and cast their spells, our Knights can already chop and slash them more than seven to eight times, right?”

“It’s not that simple.” Anthony shook his head, but he didn’t provide any further explanation. Evidently, he had already met many people like Jack who had underestimated the Mages.

Fang Xingjian was not really sure about this as well. Originally, when considering the magic prints of Demonic City, Mages would always be ranked above Knights and Warriors. However, after cultivating for half a year in the Empire, he discovered that the four paths: Nurturing, Training, Amassing, and Killing were all extremely profound. Their might surpassed those of the magic prints.

So were the Empire’s Knights stronger or were the Mages of Uranlis stronger? He had no way to verify this.

However, he continued asking, “I wonder what sort of person the disciple of the Black Mage King is?”

Anthony replied, “I’m not very certain about this, but I heard that this disciple seems to have originated from the western regions.” After completing this sentence, he cast a glance at Fang Xingjian because his physical features, yellow-skinned and black hair, also indicated that he had a bloodline from the western regions.

After hearing this answer, Fang Xingjian had already understood. Somehow, during the competition to become the Mage King’s

disciple, Fang Clan had obtained victory in the end. Fang Xingchen had become the disciple of the Mage King, but Fang Xingjian simply did not know what or how great the price Li Shuanghua had paid.

Afterwards, Fang Xingjian continued chatting with Anthony. Mainly, he wanted to enquire about Uranlis' current situation.

Approximately ten minutes later, instructor Dick walked in and glanced at those who were present as his gaze slightly lingered for a moment on Fang Xingjian. Because Fang Xingjian obtained the position of Prefectural Champion this time around, it had caused him to lose his bet with Hogan. It could even be said that he had lost both the bet and his pride.

Although he understood that he should not blame Fang Xingjian, in the end, a hint of malice still entered his eyes every time he glanced at Fang Xingjian. In particular, Fang Xingjian was not a noble; rather, he was just a commoner and a vagrant.

Lightly coughing, Dick spoke. "Everyone, from now on, you will all be formal students of KIRST Royal Knight Academy as Knights of the Empire.

"Today is the first day of your lessons. We have many missions here, but first, your Knight attire and medallions." After he spoke, he clapped his hands as some attendants brought over Knight attires, the Empire's medallions, as well as sets of data.

After seeing the brand new attires placed in front of them, many students in the crowd had expressions of slight eagerness on their faces. Even Kaunitz and the others were all extremely excited as they saw their Knight attire.

Dick continued speaking, "A Knight attire is made from materials obtained from Fire Kirins and had the added effect of expansion and contraction. Size doesn't matter here, so all of you can just directly put it on."

Jack, who was beside Fang Xingjian, dumbly stared at the Knight attire as he continually used his hands to stroke the scales of the attire. “A Knight attire, this is a real set of a Knight attire, and I’m finally able to put them on.”

Dick continued, “As for the Knight’s medallion, it represents your identity. You can use it to enjoy the benefits of a Knight, and it is also your pass to enter the academy. Only with this medallion will you be able to enter or exit a majority of the places within the academy.

“Next, the following materials are required for you students to take note of.”

Fang Xingjian picked up the medallion from the box as he played around with it. There was a tiny bronze-colored sword with many small-sized rune-like characters engraved on it. Fang Xingjian knew that these should be the secret data that’s used to determined one’s identity.

These medallions were created by the Royal Knight Association. Not only were the materials difficult to fake, the secret data was also one of a kind. It could be said that each and every medallion ever given out by the association could be easily traced, and there was absolutely no way to counterfeit it.

He used a string to thread the gap between the coupling links of the tiny sword as he hung the medallion around his neck.

Fang Xingjian then glanced at the nearby stacked documents regarding the information to take note again. These documents told the new students about things in the academy where one needed to pay attention to. For example, students were not allowed to participate in life and death battles, and students were not allowed to enter or exit on their own. There was also a map, which showed locations of the canteen, library, reef, their dormitories, et cetera.

Naturally, some of the documents also showed some of the

benefits and preferential treatment that they would be able to enjoy based on their identity as Knights. As the champion of the Prefectural Selection, Fang Xingjian naturally would be able to enjoy the highest degree of preferential treatment, as well as to obtain the most benefits. As for this, Fang Xingjian merely roughly glossed over it without reading it in much detail.

Dick continued speaking, “Remember this, passing the Prefectural Selection and becoming a Knight is only the first step of your ten thousand mile long journey. If people who are proud just because of their results from the Prefectural Selection and don’t improve, I will personally report this matter up to our academy’s higher management and expel them from this place.”

When he spoke, both of his eyes continuously stared at Fang Xingjian, as though he were referring to him.

Afterwards, he shifted the direction of his speech, as he added, “The ten of you are considered this year’s batch of Knights, and you belong to the Class 256. Our academy was founded two hundred and fifty-six years ago, so there are already a total of two hundred and fifty-six classes, including your batch.

“Currently, there are a total of eight classes that are active within the academy, and I am the instructor in charge of your class.

“There will be a monthly competition between different classes, and based on the results, punishments will be distributed to the class in last place.”

After observing the crowd’s nonchalant expressions reflected in their faces, Dick coldly smiled as he stated, “Don’t assume the punishment is very easy. I can guarantee that none of you will like it.”

He then continued, “However, as you all are new students, you all have a buffer of three months before you need to enroll in the competition. And within these three months, the first mission you have to accomplish is to complete your first transition.

“And in the following month, the various profession lessons as well as physical training, qualities development, specialized training will all be preparation for your first transition. The choice of your profession will determine the development of your entire lives. I hope you all will take this seriously.

“A month later, there won’t be any lessons planned for all of you. Manage your own time and target, and all of you have to complete your first transition within the last two months.”

Chapter 41 Moving In

After finishing his words, Dick directly left.

After Dick had exited, Kaunitz stood up with a bang. He turned his head and glared at Fang Xingjian, giving a loud bellow, “Fang Xingjian, after we complete the first job transition three months from now, do you dare to fight with me? It will not be a private fight but an official battle, which we would need to submit an application for.”

The Royal Academy prohibited private fights but allowed for official battles. Of course, it would not be a life and death battle but only until a victor was decided.

If person A were to kill person B in a battle, then person A would also have his tendons destroyed and his Knight status removed. If one were to purposefully cripple his opponent, then the punishment would be based on the severity of the situation. At the very least, one’s identity as a Knight would be removed, and one would be barred from enrolling into the academy for forever.

After all, this was a national organization, and it would be sufficient to determine the victor in a battle. How could they allow for members to engage in internal killings.

Of course, this was sufficient to Kaunitz. What he wanted was to triumph over the other party before humiliating Fang Xingjian.

While Fang Xingjian did not bother with the other party, he knew that there would not be an end to the troubles if he were to show signs of inferiority now. Thus, he said directly, “Three months?

“How about this, three months from now, I’ll take you on with just one hand.”

“You!” Flashes of fury flickered across Kaunitz’s face as he immediately drew his sword. He wanted to charge over, but he was

held back by those around him.

“Don’t!”

“Kaunitz, stay calm. You are not his match right now.”

“Do you want him to knock you out with one sword swing again?”

These words of advice made Kaunitz so angry that he almost puked blood.

Robert who had wanted to take his leave also gave a cold snort and said to Fang Xingjian, “Brat, don’t you think you’re being too arrogant?”

Fang Xingjian threw him a glance and said, “I haven’t settled the score with you yet from the Prefectural Selection. How about we settle it three months from now?”

“Hahahaha.” Robert could not help but laughed and said, “Brat, do you even know what you’re talking about? Who do you think you’re talking to?”

“Or do you think that after three months, you will also have completed the first transition and will have eliminated the gap between us?”

However, since Fang Xingjian felt he had made his point, he no longer wished to engage himself in a battle of words. If he had time for this, he might as well have practiced the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth a few more times.

Therefore, he turned and said, “Three months from now, the two of you can attack together, so that you won’t waste my time.”

With a bang, Robert landed a fist on the table, which caused the table to cave in and fall apart.

Looking at Fang Xingjian’s back, he said viciously, “B*stard, you’re really courting death...”

Jack and Anthony took a look at Robert and the vicious

aristocrats. They laughed bitterly and ran after Fang Xingjian.

Jack of the City Guards Institution ran first to Fang Xingjian's side and asked, "Why are you so rash?"

"Sigh, this is troublesome. The crucial heir of clans like Kaunitz has had his path planned out since his youth based on his constitution, interest, and personality.

"For the sake of his first job transition, he had begun preparatory work since he was young. Therefore, after completing his first transition, his upgraded battle power will have increased greatly.

"Xingjian, while you are talented, how will you be able to surpass his ten or more years of preparation within three months? After you've completed the first transition, you'll need to go through an adjustment period of a few months before you will be able to perfectly display your battle power."

After listening to his words, Fang Xingjian's and Anthony's eyes revealed curiosity in their gazes.

Fang Xingjian asked, "Are you very familiar with job transitions?"

Jack shook his head. "You guys will find out after attending tomorrow's class. The first period is the job transition planning class. You'll be able to obtain a complete set of information."

At the same time Fang Xingjian and the others carried their Knight attires and many materials outside, two ladies were staring in their direction from a windowsill over fifty meters away.

One of them was about fifteen or sixteen years old with a pair of bright and beautiful eyes, and she was emitting a presence of youth and vitality all over.

A middle-aged lady in luxurious clothings was at her side.

The middle-aged lady looked at those three who were over fifty meters away. When her gaze landed on their clothing, she

subconsciously furrowed her brows.

Fang Xingjian, needless to say, was even wearing today the clothes he had brought from the fishing village. As for Anthony and Jack, while they were slightly better off, they were still not worth mentioning before an aristocrat's eyes.

The middle-aged lady subconsciously felt displeasure when she saw the other party's actions and attire. She turned her head toward her daughter beside her and asked, "Liz, what do you think?"

This middle-aged lady was full of adoration toward her precious daughter. From her daughter's childhood, she had never let her daughter feel any hint of grief. Her daughter was someone she held dear to her heart. It could be said she feared that her daughter would fly too close to the sun.

If her husband had not spoken with such certainty that Fang Xingjian was an absolutely talented genius and that they should quickly grasp the opportunity, she would definitely not have brought her daughter here.

The husband and father to this pair of mother and daughter was that white-bearded old man who was the first to doubt Fang Xingjian in the third stage of the Prefectural Selection. He was also Kirs Royal Academy's sword art instructor.

However, while he had told his wife and daughter that Fang Xingjian was very talented and outstanding, Huang Lin had already ordered them to keep their mouths shut in order to protect Fang Xingjian. Therefore, they just did not know the degree of Fang Xingjian's talent.

After hearing her mother's question, the young lady pouted her lips and said, "He is very dirty..." After saying this, she grabbed her mother's arm and swung it repeatedly as she said in a spoiled manner, "Why did father ask me to get close to this guy? Mother, did you see that? His hair is so dirty that they are all sticking

together. Do you really want to see me marry this kind of guy?”

The mother furrowed her brows as she looked at Fang Xingjian's appearance. While she really did not feel happy about this either, she still said, “Your father mentioned that he is a pedigreed horse, a sword talent that may not exist for decades. If he became your husband, you would not need to worry about your life in the future.”

“I don't want, I don't want, I don't want.” The young lady said spitefully, “Brother Hylong is so much better. He is handsome, gentle, and polite. He can even play music and write poetry.”

“Sigh, Hylong is good, but he's doomed to be stuck at the first transition for life. Do you want to be stuck in KIRST all your life like me?” Her mother shook her head helplessly and said, “And if a person is dirty, he can always clean up...”

“Mother!!!”

After noticing how her daughter was reacting, she sighed and said, “Alright, alright, alright. Let's wait another three months and see how it goes. We will need to at least see what job he chooses for the first transition before we decide. It's not as if there weren't any exceptional talents within history that had made the wrong decision for their first job transition.”

That young lady was still unhappy as she said, “Hmph, this ugly freak won't be able to get a good job for his first job transition. I can even smell his stench from fifty meters away.”

...

Fang Xingjian was unaware that he had become the star of someone's criticism, and he split up from Anthony and Jack after they reached the residential area.

As Knights of the academy, they were each assigned a two storied villa with maids to clean daily. After all, now that they had become Knights, how would they be allowed to waste their time on

household chores?

When Fang Xingjian drew closer to the entrance of the villa, he saw three middle-aged women waiting there. They bowed and one of them said, “Lord Fang Xingjian, we’re your exclusive maids.

“I’ll be in charge of cleaning your room daily. Regarding your food, Master Huang Lin has already decided on your behalf. This is your diet plan.”

“Diet plan?” Fang Xingjian received the diet plan from the other party and noticed that his breakfast, brunch, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner, and midnight snack were written on it.

He had arranged for Fang Xingjian to have six meals daily, including ferocious beasts’ essence, medicinal food, herbs, and specially selected vegetables and bread. They all seemed to be customized for Fang Xingjian, and the amount of food in the six meals were all decided after considering Fang Xingjian’s absorption and consumption.

This amount was almost the upper limit of what Fang Xingjian could absorb.

After all, Fang Xingjian was a strong person who trained both internally and externally. Even if he were to eat a large amount of food, it would only take a slight effort for him to chew and for his organs to move, and the food would mostly be digested in an instant.

However, after reading that he would be able to ingest a portion of ferocious beasts’ essence daily, Fang Xingjian’s eyebrows could not help but twitch.

Chapter 42 First Transition

To think that he could have access to a portion of ferocious beast's essence daily. Even the Fang Clan could only drink a bowl of Nine Blood Spirit-Changing Soup every day.

Although the ferocious beasts provided by the academy were of as high a grade as the Nine-Headed Abyss Bird, it was the allocation for Empire's Knights.

Fang Xingjian asked, "Do we need to pay extra money for the daily partaking of ferocious beasts' essence?"

"No need." The female servant had a face full of deference as she looked at Fang Xingjian. This was a student that a master of the second transition personally planned the diet for.

"A portion of ferocious beasts' essence daily. This is the preferential treatment for the Prefectural Champion."

Fang Xingjian took out the data that was given out earlier. Indeed, the one in first place would be able to partake in a portion of ferocious beast's essence daily, while the one in tenth place would only be able to enjoy a portion of ferocious beast's essence every three days.

And as for income, residence and such, the one in first place would get rewards ten times better than someone in the tenth place.

Being the Prefectural Champion brought not only honor, there were also many other concrete benefits.

Fang Xingjian nodded his head and said, "That's enough, let's go in."

Under the lead of the maid, Fang Xingjian was taken on a tour around the residence. The whole villa had an area of over five hundred square meters and a complete set of a variety of rooms. Basically, there was a living room for receiving guests, dining

rooms, toilets, training rooms, study rooms, bedrooms, guest rooms, and even a room for the female servant.

After making arrangements for the female servant to clean the room and prepare food, Fang Xingjian directly went to the training room to practice the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth. He wanted to make good use of this one month, or just half a month to perfect the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth to the maximum level. Not only that, he also wanted to quickly deplete the potential he had accumulated.

After all, things like accumulated potential were useless if stored within one's body. One had to constantly deplete it, and it would be optimal to maintain a balance with the amount of depletion. Only through this would one be able to gain the most benefits.

For this purpose, he decided to shorten his amount of sleep once again, sleeping only from 12am to 3am for three hours daily.

However, considering his current body's constitution, sleeping for three hours was comparable to an ordinary human's sleep of six hours. Although it was tough to do so, he could still bear it and it would not bring harm to his body.

In the training room, Fang Xingjian executed the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth again and again, stepping forth with each slash he made. And with each step, he retracted his sword which followed with another slash again.

Slash slash slash slash slash. His entire state of mind was immersed within the series of slashes, relentlessly exhausting his potential. His strength attribute increased slowly but resolutely, akin to the piece of iron enduring the hammering of a blacksmith's blow, tempering his body.

Simultaneously, he also got increasingly familiar with each of the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth's movements, with each change in every iota of force.

Sword arts of the Nurturing Path took gradual and steady progress. They strengthened the constitution and nurtured the spirit, accumulating the body's potential.

Sword arts of the Training Path were assiduous training. They broke through one's limits again and again, akin to a hammer's blows raining down on one's body, constantly releasing the accumulated potential, allowing one's body to transcend its limits again and again.

But regardless of if it was the Training or Nurturing Path, they were all cultivation methods, and were not a way to kill one's enemies.

The academy's lessons would usually be held in the morning. On the morning of the second day, Fang Xingjian chose to attend lessons on job planning.

An instructor was standing on the platform as he spoke unceasingly. Below, there were only the ten students from Fang Xingjian's Class 256.

"The profoundness of job transitions lies in space.

"Some of you already know this, some of you don't. But regardless, all of you better seriously focus and pay close attention to what I'm saying. Firstly, I will talk about the three great theories.

"The first one is the principle of space stability.

"This world which we are in is formed by space and time.

"Space represents the existence of the myriad of things while time presents their motion.

"Space, is incomparably tough. So tough that it's impossible to break. For example, even if all the Divine Level cultivators struck out together towards one point, it would still be impossible for them to break through space.

“However, there are always exceptions. In certain mysterious places, the structure of space isn’t as stable, and there would be many creases and cracks. To the extent that with each passing second, there would be the creation and destruction of innumerable spatial tunnels.

“For places like this, we refer to them as the secret realms.

“The second one is the theory of ether particles. In spaces we cannot see, there exists a special kind of energy.

“This energy is akin to the air that surrounds us, encompassing everything in the world. However, we have no way to sense them or touch them.

“Because the space in our world is too stable and would always be in a state of equilibrium, the instant this type of energy appeared, it would be obliterated immediately in the next instant. They exists for too short a period of time, causing us to be unable to utilize or even observe this kind of energy through conventional methods.

“We refer this kind of omnipresent, infinite and boundless energy as ‘ether particles’. We can only attempt to come into contact with them in the secret realms where there is spatial instability.

“The third theory is that the myriad of living things in this world are all formed by waves. From something as big as the sun, moon and constellations, to something as small as ether particles. You all have to remember that ether particles themselves are a type of waves as well rather than being an actual particle. If you can’t even understand this, you would have no hope of completing the job transition.

“And our body, our consciousness, are also actually the superposition of countless waves.

“When we are within a secret realm, in that place where the

ether particles are the most active, after using the waves from our consciousness and body to pry open the gate to ether particles, we will be able to obtain extraordinary powers and obtain the recognition of the Jobs Window.

“We refer to this process as job transition.”

The instructor on the platform spoke with confidence and composure, while the majority of the Knights below were already drowsy and falling asleep.

Only Fang Xingjian was seriously listening to the theories as he pondered over the rationale unceasingly in his mind.

‘The theories shared by this instructor did have some similarities with Earth’s wave theory, something similar to quantum theory.

‘However, I don’t really remember the specific differences.

‘But if this was really the case, the scientists under Earth’s governments should have already researched this. Are the laws of physics in the Miracle World really different from that of Earth?’

Fang Xingjian did not know the exact answer, and this was also not something he could deal with now. Thus, he continued listening to the lecture.

“So if one wishes to go through the job transition, there are two basic conditions. The first condition is to find a secret realm. All of you have already met this requirement and they are also of the best quality. KIRST Royal Academy possesses a total of seven secret realms, and there are sufficient for the students’ usage.

“The second condition is to use yourself to move ether particles.

“Our body, consciousness and ether particles are all made of waves. If one of them wishes to move another, it is important to maintain a similar frequency.

“And as for the frequency of one’s body and consciousness, we

termed that as vital frequency.

“We are unable to determine how much your vital frequencies are and also have no idea the differences between your vital frequencies and that of the ether particles.

“But with our Empire’s three hundred years of experience, we are able to roughly know what kind of person can move what kind of ether particles, and transition to what kind of jobs. These are the precious experiences accumulated by countless seniors and geniuses who had made numerous attempts on themselves to conduct experiments.

“And only in the Royal Academy would you be able to browse over this data unconditionally. But, remember, all this data regarding job transitions are not to be divulged to anyone, else you will be charged with the crime of treason.

“Remember, your body’s frequency as well as your attributes, techniques and specialties are all connected. However, the most important thing is, the Amassing Path.

“The Nurturing Path accumulates potential, while the Training Path expends the potential. These two paths are able to temper one’s body, adjusting one’s attributes.

“Amassing Path on the other hand, is able to modify your vital frequency, changing the essence of your life and thus allowing for communication with the ether particles.

“It is the same as how the Nurturing Path is split into exterior nurturing and interior nurturing; the Amassing Path is also split into two categories.

“The first one is to grasp the rhythm of breathing, adjusting the circulation of blood and thus causing the frequency within one’s body to match with a certain distinctive type of Wave.

“The second one is to adjust one’s thoughts and transforming one’s mental state, allowing one’s mental frequency to match with

a certain distinctive type of mental cultivation method.

“Therefore, if you wish to transition to the job of your choice, you will need to use the remaining time to adjust yourselves. Pick up Waves and mental cultivation methods, allowing your Waves, mental cultivation technique, attributes, techniques and specialities to get as close to the requirements of the job transition of your choice. The closer you are to the requirements, the higher the probability of a successful job transition.

“One more thing, don’t blame me for being naggy, let me reiterate once again, all information related to job transitions are not to be divulged to even your descendants. These include the information about the various jobs, all the recorded Waves and mental cultivation methods in the academy. Those who divulge this information will be charged with treason.”

Gazing at the ten people who were now paying close attention to the lecture seriously, the lecturer spoke with indifference, “Alright, now I will start to introduce the types of jobs for the job transitions. Today, the first job to be introduced is... Landslide Torrenater.”

Chapter 43 Job Information

From there, the instructor started to introduce each first transition job one by one. This included their abilities, their extraordinary powers, their progression, their skills and specialties, as well as the possible paths for their second or even third job transitions.

Of course, the prerequisites required in order to complete these first job transitions were the most important.

He described the number of points required for the strength, agility, reaction, endurance and flexibility attributes respectively.

What specialties were required, what skills to acquire, and what level were also mentioned.

And the most crucial things were the selection of Waves as well as the mental cultivation methods.

Everyone, including Robert, listened attentively to the instructor's explanation. While Robert had already completed the first transition, this opportunity to obtain information on the other first transition jobs was hard to come by. This was only possible through the Royal Academy.

His goal was the second transition, which required him to compete with the other Knights in the Royal Academy and eventually pass the Regional Selection. To do so, he would naturally need a better understanding of the traits of the other first transition jobs.

As for Kaunitz, Barbara, and the other aristocrats, they could not be compared with the influential aristocrats in the Empire's central. However, through their clan's help, they had obtained some generic information with regards to the direction of their first transition job choice. However, this was not as detailed as the information accumulated by the Royal Academy, which came from

the Empire's hundred years of efforts of numerous generations of talents.

As for Jack, Anthony, and the others, they were deeply engrossed in the explanation and were full of excitement and longing for these mysteries of the first transition.

They were especially engrossed in the information on access to the specialties available within the academy. This included which instructors they could approach for guidance on the various skills or even the instructors and seniors who had taken on the same job for their first job transition.

This information was extremely crucial. After all, no matter how good the job was, they would need to satisfy the various prerequisites and look for people who could give them guidance on the specialties, techniques, Waves, and mental cultivation methods.

“Alright, this is it for the three jobs shared today.” The instructor packed up the materials and said, “If you guys need to review this material, you can check them out for yourselves in the library.

We will be progressively introducing the seventeen types of jobs you can transition to in our KIRST Royal Academy. On the last day, I will be giving out the application form for the first job transition. After you've filled out the job you wish to transition to, when approval is granted, the academy will arrange for you your instructors and your various courses to attend.

“Finally, there is one more mandatory piece of information instructors are required to share ever since the Empire had set up the academy's system. However, I still must advise against you all from doing this.

“That is, in the event you do not wish to take on a job from the seventeen types that I've shared, you can do your own research in the library to find out about the successful cases of other first transition jobs from the Empire's history.

“But I must remind you again, the seventeen types of job transitions that I’ve introduced are not only strong, they are also the ones which the current instructors in the academy can guide you. If you were to choose other jobs, it’s likely that there’ll be no one who would be able to guide you on the various Waves, mental cultivation methods, skills, and specialties.”

After class, Kaunitz glared in Fang Xingjian’s direction and left. Robert also laughed coldly a few times before taking his leave.

Fang Xingjian left the classroom together with Jack and Anthony.

Jack said, “Anyway, I don’t plan on looking for a job which no one can give me guidance. It’s something that only fools would do.”

Anthony nodded his head and said, “For now, the academy only arranged for us to have classes in the morning. Where do you guys plan on going in the afternoon? I plan to head to the training grounds to take a look. It’s said that many Knights from the previous years all practice there.”

Jack smiled and said, “I’ll head back myself. I still haven’t completed today’s homework.”

“Right, Xingjian, where are you planning on going?”

“The library.”

“The library?” Both Jack and Anthony cried out as they looked at Fang Xingjian and said, “You must be kidding. Are you really thinking about choosing another job?”

“Not necessarily, but don’t you guys think those first transition jobs that the instructor had introduced earlier were not strong enough?” Fang Xingjian said calmly.

While those jobs he had heard earlier were strong enough as they were, compared to Demonic City’s top notch first transition jobs, they were only slightly better off. One would only be able to fend

off three or four people at one go, and what Fang Xingjian needed was something with overwhelming power.

“The system for the Empire’s Knights is considered to be stronger than Demonic City’s. However, after taking into consideration other advantages, it is still insufficient. To eradicate an existence at the level of the Five Great Clans, what I need would be something powerful enough to single-handedly combat a modernized army of armored forces...

“While it is much easier to complete the job transition for these seventeen jobs, they are only considered the upper tier of the middle level. What I need is an even stronger job.”

“Not strong enough?” Jack said exaggeratedly, “My god, the job Landslide Torreater for the first transition is one which increases one’s attributes. With each additional level, there’s a 5 point increase in strength, 2 point increase in agility, and 5 point increase in endurance. Don’t forget that the job’s specialty allows one to borrow strength from the earth. The job’s skill allows one to harden one’s skin such that it is impenetrable and has resistance to both fire and water.

“Is this still not strong enough?”

Fang Xingjian smiled and did not answer. He was from one of the Five Great Clans and even if he was not favored, his expectation was not something commoners like Jack and Anthony would be able to understand. With just modernized weapons alone, there would be plenty of ways to deal with these jobs.

Fang Xingjian only said, “Anyway, I’ll only be taking a look and will be deciding after I listen to all of the introductions for the various jobs.”

After arriving at the library, Fang Xingjian approached the librarian and asked directly, “I want to look at all the material pertaining to first transition jobs.”

The librarian led him to a row of shelves, pointed to the few hundreds books, and said, “These all introduce the various first transition jobs.”

Fang Xingjian looked at the books before him, frowned, and asked, “Aren’t there are too many of them?”

If he were to spend time to going through all of these books, how would he be able to find time for his sword practice?

After noticing that the librarian was about to leave, he quickly stopped the other party and asked, “You have the access rights to all these materials?”

“Mmm, what about it?” He did not know what the librarian’s background was. When he saw Fang Xingjian, he did not behave cautiously like how the other servants were when they saw Knights. On the contrary, a hint of laziness filled his face as if he was not interested in anything at all.

“Can you help me organize the materials from these books...”

Before Fang Xingjian had finished his sentence, the librarian turned to leave, mumbling, “No time.”

Fang Xingjian said, “What if I pay you?” He would definitely want to receive help from the maids or engage someone to find materials he needed, but apparently not everyone had the access rights to these materials on job transitions.

And why would ordinary Knights accept his request?

After hearing that Fang Xingjian would be paying, the librarian paused in his tracks and asked, “How much can you pay?”

Fang Xingjian replied, “If you can organize all the materials, I’ll pay you four hundred copper coins.” When he had taken on tough jobs earlier, he only managed to earn one hundred copper coins. To him, it was very generous that he was paying the other party five hundred straight.

However, that librarian immediately turned to leave, asking, "Do you think that you're trying to dismiss a beggar?"

"Wait, wait up." Fang Xingjian grabbed the other party's shoulders and forcefully pulled him back.

The librarian shouted out, "What are you doing? It's a serious offense to attack the academy's staff."

"Don't be hasty, I can pay you more."

"Oh?" The librarian's eyes rolled and he said, "How much can you pay?"

Fang Xingjian gave it some thought. Every month, the academy gave him ten gold coins, and the prize for being this year's Prefectural Champion was fifty gold coins. This was almost enough for an ordinary family to live in the Empire without worrying at all.

Chapter 44 Four Types of Jobs

Fang Xingjian gave it some thought and said, “One gold coin, which is the equivalent of one thousand copper coins. How’s that?”

That librarian said smugly, “Three gold coins, and depending on the difficulty, there may be a need to adjust the cost later.”

“Three gold coins?” Fang Xingjian gritted his teeth. As a Prefectural Champion, he was only given ten gold coins per month, while Carter would only get one gold coin per month, since he was ranked tenth.

Fang Xingjian nodded and asked, “What’s your name?”

“Manny.”

Fang Xingjian took in a deep breath and said, “Very well, Manny, three gold coins it is. Within three days, I want you to retrieve all first transition jobs which utilize the sword and focus on sword arts as the main source of power. After that, make me a copy of those records.”

Manny immediately broke into a wide smile and said, “Rest assured, no one is more familiar than me with the books in this library. I’ll start making a copy of them for you tomorrow.”

Fang Xingjian nodded, “Right, there are also books on sword arts in the library? Bring me there to take a look.”

After leaving the library, Fang Xingjian was still feeling slightly stuffy. He had considered using other options, or even threatening Manny.

However, he thought about it from another perspective. Since it was something which could be settled with money, why would he need to complicate things? Now, to him, time was the most crucial thing. After the Prefectural Selection, he was only left with four and a half years’ time and he needed to make good use of it.

Therefore, he headed straight back to the villa, and once he entered the training room, he immediately started fanatically training the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth. The explosive sounds from the waves of his sword were like thunder, sounding out endlessly in the room.

The servants who passed by would all looked towards the direction of the room in awe.

...

Two days later, Manny lugged documents which were as tall as half a person's height and arrived at Fang Xingjian's villa.

Seeing Fang Xingjian coming out slowly from the training room baring the upper half of his body, he made himself at home, going through Fang Xingjian's wine cabinet and said, "Wow, you have quite a lot of good wine here."

Fang Xingjian sat on the sofa, took a stack of documents and started reading. He then casually said, "They were all given by the academy, I don't drink them."

"You don't drink them?" Manny grabbed a wine bottle filled with a silvery transparent liquid and shouted out, "Do you know how much this bottle of Mountain Spring Fruit Wine costs? Since you don't drink them, you might as well give it to me."

"Help yourself." Fang Xingjian's eyes were still fixed on the documents, ignoring Manny who kept trying to stuff the bottles of wine into his pocket. He asked directly, "Which few are the most powerful amongst these?"

"I knew you'd ask." Manny pointed to the few documents in a file with the upper right corner of their pages labelled in red and said, "These four are the strongest amongst all these jobs for the first transition. Take a look yourself."

Fang Xingjian drew them out. The first that he saw was Void Sword Sovereign; job progression included an additional 2 points

in strength, 2 points in agility, 2 points in reaction, 2 points in endurance, and 2 points in flexibility.

It was a very mediocre progression, but it came with a job skill, Sword Qi of the Void, which could utilize ether particles to launch sword Qi through gaps in space to attack enemies.

Space was a very strong existence which was hard to break through. However, it did not exist as a whole but contained numerous gaps and openings. Sword Qi of the Void could pass through those gaps, moving without a trace yet with a sharpness that was unparalleled. It was a top notch assassination job.

Fang Xingjian flipped to the next page. Starcluster Hunter: increased strength by 3 points, agility by 3 points, and reaction by 6 points. The Star Hunter focused on the reaction attribute, and with the two specialities, namely Innate Reflexes and Basic Instinct, it would give the person unbelievable reactive speed, allowing him to make the first strike almost all the time during close combat.

Next was a job called Windstorm Sword Hero. The attribute progression for this job was very simple, merely a 9 point increase in agility. It came with two specialties, the first was the Windstorm Footsteps, which could increase one's movement speed immensely. The second was the Sonic Slash, which could increase the speed of launching one's sword attack.

This was obviously a job which specialized in agility. The person would be able to fight and escape as he wished, and would be able to attack at the speed of lightning.

The last one was Sovereign of Ten Thousand Swords. The job progression was a 4 point increase in strength, 4 points in agility, and 4 points in flexibility. It came with a specialty known as Protection of Ten Thousand Swords, which would increase one's body defence. There was another specialty which was the soul of this job, the Throne of Ten Thousand Swords, which would allow

one to accumulate strength daily, storing sword Qi in one's body up to thousands or tens of thousands that could be released at once if the situation called for it.

Of course, each of the four jobs had the basic abilities for a first job transition, which was to communicate with ether particles and thus display Reduced Force-Field (a universal ability which was achieved from communicating with ether particles to change life's intrinsic quality, and which could allow Knights to display a force-field of half their strength within a ten-meter circumference.)

The four jobs each had their advantages and disadvantages, but all of them far surpassed that of the first transition jobs the instructor had shared with them.

Fang Xingjian looked at the jobs' materials with gleaming eyes and said, "For these four first transition jobs, there are no instructors in the academy now who can provide full guidance?"

"You're speaking the obvious. If not, you think that the instructor wouldn't tell you?" Manny's clothes were bulging after having stuffed in quite a number of wine bottles. He even made clanking sounds while he was walking. "Be it specialties, or skills, or prints, or mental cultivation methods, there is no one who can teach the prerequisites for these jobs. This means that if you want to transition into one of these four jobs, there are many areas in which you'll have to self-study.

My advice is that even if you want to pick a unique job, you should take a look at others as well. There aren't many people in the course of the Empire's history who have achieved success in these four jobs.

Hehe, are you satisfied?" Saying this, Manny rubbed his hands fawningly as he looked at Fang Xingjian.

Fang Xingjian took out three gold coins, but when Manny reached out his hands, he pulled them back.

“What is the meaning of this?” Manny said anxiously.

“I’ll give you two gold coins first.” Fang Xingjian said, “To get the remaining one, you’ll need to find me some other materials.”

Receiving the two gold coins, Manny glared at Fang Xingjian. However, it was as Fang Xingjian had expected. The other party’s mania towards money was sufficient to let him take this lying down.

“What do you want?”

“For these four jobs, I want all the details for all those who have completed the first transition for these jobs in the Empire’s history, the more detailed the better.”

...

The next few days, Fang Xingjian attended class with Jack and Anthony in the day to learn about the seventeen types of jobs the academy provided them with. During the other time, he would stay in the training room to practice the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth while studying the materials Manny had provided him with.

The days passed, and seven days later, Fang Xingjian had already reached level 12 for the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth, which gave him an additional point in strength and 1 point in agility.

Another thing was that he would practice the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth fanatically. He would accumulate potential for techniques in the training path, then expend the over 120,000 potential points until there was only about 20,000 left. Because of this, his strength had also increased by 3 points.

In these days, he depleted a massive amount of potential in one go. The 3500 potential points he accumulated daily through the practicing of nurturing techniques were completely depleted after he expended four to five thousand potential points daily. From

there, he started to practice the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth for one to two hours daily to deplete the 3,500 potential points he accumulated daily.

Other than training, Fang Xingjian also took in various nourishing medications and ferocious beasts' essence, bringing the effects of his training to an even higher level. His muscles and bones continued to grow, providing nourishment for potential.

There would be people who would bring hot water, clean water and a change of clothes so that he no longer needed to pay heed to his hygiene.

And after the past half year of training, his body had also continued to grow. His height grew to over 1.9 meters, and in his blue Knight's suit, he appeared to be big and sturdy, with a sharp gaze, and his muscles and bones were twisted together to be as tough as steel. His skin and flesh was like a layer of steel, protecting his body, while his black hair swayed in the wind like fiery flames.

This made him appear like one of the legendary battle gods.

Compared to half a year ago, the Fang Xingjian now was a world away from the one before.

And his attributes had changed too.

Name
Fang Xingjian
Age
16
Occupation
Warrior's Squire
Level

Strength

38

Agility

43

Reaction

23

Endurance

30

Flexibility

32

Techniques:

Single-handed Sword Grab

Level 20

Cross-slash

Level 20

Grizzly Bear Sword Technique

Level 30

Eagle Sword Technique

Level 30

Tenauer-Style Body Strengthening Sword Technique

Level 30

Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique

Level 20

Chaotic Strike

Level 20

Silver Moon Prayer Sword Technique

Level 20

Descent of Holy Light

Level 10

Tresia-Style Foundation Sword Technique

Level 20

Nine-Headed Dragon Sword Technique

Level 1

Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth

Level 12

Specialities:

Genius Swordsmanship,

Survival Instinct,

Internal Healing,

Internal Training,

Sword Specialist

On this day, when he entered the classroom again, he immediately felt a tight tension. No one spoke. Not even Jack, who usually appeared the most relaxed, and who loved to joke. Jack's lips were tightly shut, and his gaze gave away the fact that he was pondering.

It was the day of the last class of the job planning curriculum. It was also the day when everyone would have to fill in their application forms to decide what their first transition job would be.

Chapter 45 Application

Jack kept scratching his head as if he had to make an extremely tough choice.

Anthony had finished filling up the application long ago, but his thighs kept shaking non-stop, and he still seemed to have some hesitation.

Compared to them, Kaunitz and the others looked to be calmer. After all, they had long before started their preparatory work in their respective clans. Renowned Knight characters had been the ones to choose their future paths for them. Therefore, Kaunitz and the others had immediately been able to choose their routes from the seventeen jobs.

Fang Xingjian also sat down and started to fill in the application form.

Out of the materials that Manny the librarian had gotten for him, he focused on the four main jobs, namely the Void Sword Sovereign, Starcluster Hunter, Windstorm Sword Hero and Sovereign of Ten Thousand Swords. Although he also swept across the other sword based jobs, they could not compare to these four.

In addition, these four jobs brought greater advantages compared to the seventeen the instructor had listed. Fang Xingjian believed that only if he chose one of these would he be able to eradicate the Onassis Clan, to suppress Li Shuanghua and question her about his mother, all by himself in the span of four and a half years.

Out of these four jobs, the Void Sword Sovereign's attribute increment was the lowest, but the Sword Qi of the Void was unpredictable and impossible to guard against. It was said to be the best for sneak attacks and assassinations.

Starcluster Hunter brought unparalleled reflexes, and would even be able to predict battle situations to a certain degree. Out of

the four jobs, it was the best for close combat.

Windstorm Sword Hero brought unparalleled speed, allowing one to battle and then escape with ease. It had the highest level in terms of generic abilities.

The last one, the Sovereign of Ten Thousand Swords, allowed for the accumulation of powers and releasing them at once. It was the best for arena battles. Amongst the four, it was the best in terms of explosive force, and for one on one battles.

As for the other sword-based jobs Manny had gathered information on, he only glanced through them once, quickly. They were truly unable to compare with these four.

Fang Xingjian pondered for a very long time, scanning through the historical records of the many strong Warriors, which Manny had brought at a later time, before he finally decided to choose Windstorm Sword Hero for his first job transition.

One reason was because the speed of his movements and actions was too important, and as long as these two aspects were of high enough level, then he would be able to both attack and defend, and he would be able to have absolute overwhelming powers over his weaker opponents.

This made the overall abilities for the Windstorm Sword Hero to be stronger. In addition, with Fang Xingjian's sword talent, combined with the unrivalled agility and numerous sword arts, his battle prowess would rise greatly.

Of course, the most important thing was that from his research, he had noticed that only three people in the Empire's entire history had succeeded in transitioning into Windstorm Sword Hero. However, all three of them had eventually completed the third transition, and had become strong Warriors of the Divine Level. Fang Xingjian had the confidence that he would be able to transition into any of these four jobs, and so he eventually decided on the Windstorm Sword Hero.

After having looked through the records of the only three strong Warriors to successfully undergo this job transition in the whole of the Empire's history, Fang Xingjian started to think about something else.

‘Windstorm Sword Hero may be able to go even further... and might even be able to fully surpass the other three jobs!’

Not much later, everyone had made their choice. No matter whether they were hesitant, certain, or regretful, eventually they had all made a decision which would affect them for life.

After the instructor collected everyone's applications, he took a glance and frowned.

“Fang Xingjian...” He looked towards Fang Xingjian and asked, “Are you sure that you want to select Windstorm Sword Hero?”

“Windstorm Sword Hero?” Jack turned his head to Fang Xingjian who was beside him and asked, “Xingjian, this isn't one of the seventeen transition jobs?”

Fang Xingjian calmly answered, “It's not. I came across this in the library.”

Hearing his reply, Jack and Anthony could not help but smile bitterly, looking at him as if they were looking at a monster.

Kaunitz laughed out loud, his gaze towards Fang Xingjian expressing extreme disdain, and said “Ignorant people are truly fearless.”

Barbara, Ferdinand and the others also grinned coldly, looking at Fang Xingjian as if they were looking at an idiot.

The instructor came down from the platform and stood before Fang Xingjian, asking, “Do you know that the attribute requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero are extremely harsh? And that it has high requirements in terms of specialties?”

“This job is very powerful, but there are literally no instructors

in the academy who can guide you. No, I should say that even if there were an instructor for this job, it would be useless.

“Your choice is to transit into Windstorm Sword Hero, but once you enter the secret realm, if you are not able to fulfill all the prerequisites, it is highly possible that your job transition will fail and that you will encounter the backlash from the ether particles.

“And do you know that across the over two hundred years in the Empire’s history, there were only three who succeed in transitioning into a Windstorm Sword Hero? Do you think you can become the fourth?”

Fang Xingjian calmly replied, “I know all these, but I am confident I will succeed.”

“You’re confident you will succeed? Do you think this is a game?” said the instructor, his voice getting louder, feeling a bit resentful and impatient that Fang Xingjian was unable to show improvement or meet expectations. “Do you know how many geniuses in history have set their goals for the first transition too high and ended up failing the transition in the secret realm? They ended up wasting their lives, and some of them could not take it and even committed suicide.”

Seeing that Fang Xingjian was being reprimanded, Kaunitz and the others were all relishing his misfortune. Jack and Anthony were anxious. However, they did not know how to persuade him.

Fang Xingjian replied, “Across the Empire, there is no regulation saying that I cannot pick Windstorm Sword Hero as my transition job, is there?”

“You!” The instructor had not thought that Fang Xingjian would be so stubborn. He pointed to him and said, “You are destroying your own future.” After saying this, he left with the application forms. Before leaving the classroom, he turned around to say, “I will be reporting this to the Headmaster. I advise you to change your mind earlier.”

After the instructor left, Kaunitz and the others broke into loud laughter.

Barbara from Fei Yang Knight Academy, who excelled in archery, smiled and said, “Great genius, then we shall wait for you to transition into the Windstorm Sword Hero. Kaunitz, after he completes the job transition and becomes a Windstorm Sword Hero, you’ll most likely not be his match.”

“Hmph, if he can really assume the role of a Windstorm Sword Hero, so what if I lose?” Kaunitz stared at Fang Xingjian with bloodshot eyes and said, “I’m just afraid that some people have set their expectations too high and will end up failing their job transition.”

Fang Xingjian threw them a cold look before he turned around to leave. Jack and Anthony exchanged a glance, then they dashed out after him.

Once they were out of the classroom, Jack tried to persuade him, “Xingjian, why must you choose the Windstorm Sword Hero? There’s no one who can guide you for this job and you’ll be in trouble if your job transition fails.”

“That’s right, if you were to self-study, you would only be able to look up information in the library. There won’t be anyone who can give you hands-on training in the key areas, and the chances of problems cropping up would be very high.” Anthony also tried to advise him, “The seventeen jobs provided by the school are not too bad either. After succeeding in transitioning, we’ll also have higher chances in the Regional Selection.

“Moreover, didn’t you hear the instructor saying that there’s only three people who have succeeded in their transition to a Windstorm Sword Hero? The chances of succeeding in this job for the first transition are too low.”

“Chances?” Fang Xingjian said calmly. “What chances are there? The academy can only provide such mediocre jobs for the first

transition, and most of the Knights in the Empire all learn these jobs, which are also easy to pass down. You want to stand on the same starting point with the others before the Regional Selection has even started?

“While the jobs for the first transition provided by the academy may not be bad, they are still considered too weak for me.

“What is the meaning in choosing a job of a similar standard to those of the majority of people? What would allow you to be able to stand out in the Regional Selection?”

Hearing Fang Xingjian’s words, the two of them were stunned. When they came back to their senses, Fang Xingjian had already taken a few steps forward. With each step he advanced over ten meters, and so he soon disappeared from their sight.

Jack scratched his head and said, “What he said... sounds logical. With our talent, if we were to take on a first transition job of a similar standard with the majority of the Knights, then how would we be able to pass the Regional Selection in the future?”

Anthony’s brows were scrunched up, and the hesitation he was feeling when deciding on the job for the first transition earlier came back.

However, in the end, he still said, “But it would also be very hard for us to succeed in the first transition in a job that no instructors would be able to guide us through. Let alone succeeding the transitioning into the Windstorm Sword Hero which only three people in the course of the Empire’s history have managed to do.”

“That’s right.” Jack sighed and said, “To gain something, you must be prepared to take risks.”

At that moment, they were suddenly full of admiration for Fang Xingjian’s courage in deciding to transition into the Windstorm Sword Hero.

Once Fang Xingjian returned to his villa, he took out a pen and

paper, then he started making notes.

‘Based on Windstorm Sword Hero’s requirements, I’ll need to come out with a three-month-long training plan.’

Chapter 46 Plan

There were many prerequisites for the Windstorm Sword Hero, First and foremost of them was the attributes. This job required over 45 points in strength, over 60 points in agility, over 45 points in reaction, over 35 points in endurance, and over 35 points in flexibility.

The requirements for the attributes were very close to many of the Warriors who had already completed the first transition. For a normal Warrior to achieve these attributes before going through the first transition would mean that he would need to spend all his time practicing techniques in both the Nurturing Path and the Training Path, continuously accumulating and depleting potential points.

Those who were talented would need about five to six years. Those who had mediocre talent would need over ten years. And those who had poor talent would need twenty to thirty years to gain these attributes, and thus fulfill the attribute requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero.

Fang Xingjian was still short of 7 points in strength, 17 points in agility, 22 points in reaction, 5 points in endurance, and 3 points in flexibility.

However, the development of his potential was more than ten times faster than that of an ordinary person's to being with, and now, with the numerous sword techniques in the library just waiting for him to learn, he had the confidence to achieve the attribute requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero.

Other than attributes, another item was the specialities. To take on the job of the Windstorm Sword Hero, he would need three major specialties, namely Heightened Reflexes, Perfect Muscles and High Sensitivity Motion Vision.

Heightened Reflexes required one to perform a reflex action for

ten thousand times in 0.1 seconds. After obtaining it, this specialty allowed the person to instinctively perform battle reflex actions under any circumstance, thus increasing the person's reaction speed by half.

Perfect Muscles was even tougher. It required one to train every single muscle throughout the body, and to have pink-colored muscles, which had the endurance of red-colored muscles and the explosive force of white-colored muscles. It was as if a person's muscles had strong endurance, like that of a marathon champion, but also had the explosive force like that of a champion sprinter.

This specialty could increase the practitioner's strength and agility attributes with 10% of the endurance attribute's current value.

This meant that if his endurance was 50 points, his agility and strength would each increase by 5 points.

The final one was the High Agility Motion Vision. To obtain this specialty, one would need to spend long hours without the sense of hearing, relying only on one's sight to avoid ten thousand high speed attacks.

After gaining the High Agility Motion Vision, it would increase the speed at which the optic nerves transmitted information, and thus strengthen the practitioner's motion vision.

These three specialties were the foundation of the job transition for the Windstorm Sword Hero, and the basic requirements for high-speed battles. In addition, all three were specialties which demanded hard work and effort. There were no shortcuts available.

As for the skills, the Windstorm Sword Hero did not require any.

Lastly, the Waves and mental cultivation techniques required was Mistral Windgod's Waves and Ice Age Meditation Art.

The Waves and mental cultivation techniques were something

which could change life's frequencies, and which could, in essence, change one's body.

Mental cultivation techniques primarily changed one's thoughts and one's way of thinking. The Waves changed one's body and blood vessels.

Only when the two were in sync would they be able to perform even more effectively.

The two were further split into two categories, namely basic types and special types.

Mistral Windgod's Waves was considered one of the special types. When it was trained to a high level, it allowed the practitioner to work together with ether particles in order to control the atmosphere and strong winds.

Basic type Waves did not have explicit extraordinary powers, they simply facilitated the strengthening of one's physical body through the ether particles.

The same goes for mental cultivation techniques. When one was able to obtain a high enough level in mental cultivation techniques of a special type, this would allow one to perform material obstruction.

Ice Age Meditation Art was considered a basic type, and it simply increased one's basic attributes such as computational abilities and reaction.

Regardless if it was mental cultivation techniques or Waves, those classified under special types were able to obstruct the material world, while basic types could strengthen one's body. They each had their benefits, and it was difficult to compare or decide which was the better one.

The combination of the Waves and mental cultivation techniques for the Windstorm Sword Hero was such that the Mistral Mistral Windgod's Waves controlled raging wind, while the Ice Age

Meditation Art strengthened one's brain, nerves and thoughts. It was a combination of a special type with a basic type.

Looking at the many goals he had written down on paper, Fang Xingjian thought to himself, 'I must first train my attributes. After all, Heightened Reflexes and High Sensitivity Motion Vision both boil down to attribute requirements. As long as my attributes are high enough, the training for these two specialties will go much faster.'

Just as he was making his plans someone knocked on the door, and soon after a maid brought Manny in, the latter holding many books. He said, "There! These are all the sword techniques you asked for. Here are the best Nurturing sword techniques, these are the Training sword techniques for the five major attributes, and these are the renowned sword techniques of Tempest Overlord Charlemagne, of Gale Sword Deity Jude Law, and of Aurora Sword Spirit McDowell.

"However, it is impossible to find their most exemplary sword techniques in the Prefectural academy. All the records we have here are of the sword techniques they practiced before and shortly after they had gone through the first transition."

"That's sufficient..." Fang Xingjian smiled. Amongst the three specialties, the one that he had least confidence in was Perfect Muscles. Such a specialty was simply in defiance of nature, and required one to continuously and crazily destroy one's own muscles and bones.

However, looking at the biographies of the various strong Warriors, he noticed that the only three Windstorm Sword Heroes in the Empire's entire history had all become Divine Level strong Warriors and had also reached level 30. They were Tempest Overlord Charlemagne, Gale Sword Deity Jude Law and Aurora Sword Spirit McDowell."

This was also one of the reasons he had chosen the Windstorm

Sword Hero. Now, he had asked Manny to bring him the sword techniques they had practiced in their earlier days. This was also so that he could uncover the profound mysteries behind the specialty Perfect Muscles.

He believed that as long as he practiced these three persons' basic sword techniques to the maximum level, he would at least grasp an idea of how to obtain Perfect Muscles.

'Practicing techniques from the Nurturing Path and Training Path every morning and first increase the reaction attribute. Increase it with potential points first, then get additional attribute increments from practicing a variety of sword techniques. It would be more worthwhile this way.'

After all, his reaction only had 23 points, and he would only need to deplete 20,000 potential points in order to increase it by 1 point. When his attributes got higher, it would be more worthwhile to raise the reaction attribute by reaching level 10 in a myriad sword techniques.

On the contrary, when his attributes were lower, if he were to depend on the additional attributes from mastering sword techniques, then when his attributes reached about 40 to 50 points, each additional increment would cost him around 40-50,000 potential points, which was much more expensive in comparison.

'Practice techniques from the Nurturing and Training Path to increase attributes in the morning, study the three strong Warriors' basic sword techniques and experience in the afternoon,' Fang Xingjian said to himself as he wrote. 'Learn Waves and mental cultivation techniques at night.'

'Do this for one month... then make necessary adjustments subject to the results.'

Fang Xingjian's plan was to rely on his sword talent, using potential points and attribute increments from mastering sword

techniques to level 10 in order to quickly raise his attributes.

From there, he would then depend on his high attributes to forcefully train and obtain Heightened Reflexes and High Sensitivity Motion Vision.

After that, he would depend on his extraordinary sword talent to master all the basic sword techniques of the three powerhouses, and from there work on achieving the specialty Perfect Muscles.

He had yet to think of a good plan for the Waves and mental cultivation techniques. He could only be like any other person and self-study for now.

Just as Fang Xingjian was deeply engrossed in his own plan, Class 256's instructor Dick came over to him with a grim look. He busted the door open directly and went up to Fang Xingjian.

He looked at Fang Xingjian, fury flashing across his face, and asked, "Fang Xingjian, do you know what you're doing?" After finding out about Fang Xingjian's choice of such a rare job for his first transition, he had started cursing that Fang Xingjian was being ridiculous.

Putting aside Fang Xingjian's own future, since he was Class 256's instructor, if the Prefectural Champion in his class were to fail his first transition, it would obviously appear very poorly on his performance evaluation, and may even affect his own career and his position in his clan.

He swept a glance towards the plan Fang Xingjian had written down and became even more infuriated, "Do you think that just because you've won the Prefectural Champion, that your talent is unrivaled and that you can be cocky now?"

"Do you think that you're the only one who's clever, the only one who's talented, and thus would be able to assume a job which others are not able to?"

"Think about it. There are eight other classes in the academy

other than the one you are in. Putting aside the one person who has gotten through the previous Regional Selection, there are seven other Prefectural Champions. Let me tell you that, including Laurence who has passed the Regional Selection and was thus enrolled into the Regional Royal Academy, all of the Prefectural Champions chose their jobs from the seventeen jobs.”

Fang Xingjian lifted his head, looked at Dick, and calmly replied, “So what?”

Dick felt exasperated, and spoke in a tone as if he felt that Fang Xingjian was not living up to expectations to say, “Do you know how many people have succeeded in becoming a Windstorm Sword Hero in their first transition, across the whole of the Empire’s history? Three. Only three! They all became Divine level existences. Do you think that your talent is comparable to theirs?”

Fang Xingjian said, “I think it can be.”

With a bang, Dick smashed the table before Fang Xingjian into two, sending bits and pieces of books flying.

“Ignorant!

“Arrogant!”

After saying these two words, Dick turned to leave, as if he had been completely disappointed in Fang Xingjian. However, when he reached the door, he still said, “I’ve already reported this case to the headmaster and to Lord Huang Lin. You’d better think of how to explain it to them.”

Chapter 47 Conversation

Outside Huang Lin's office, over ten sword art instructors were gathered, staring in the direction of the office.

"To think that even the Headmaster is here."

"No other way out. It's been a long time since something like that occurred. To think that someone had chosen the Windstorm Sword Hero for their first job transition."

"Windstorm Sword Hero? Even if we pool in the specialties and Waves of everyone present, it'll probably still be insufficient."

"We are still able to provide guidance for High Sensitive Motion Vision and Heightened Reflexes, but we won't be able to do the same for Perfect Muscles. None of us have this specialty."

"And there's no one in the academy who knows the Mistral Windgod's Waves and Ice Age Meditation Art."

"It's impossible to succeed. The requirements for attributes are so high as well..."

"But to be able to learn Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth within six hours, Fang Xingjian is really talented."

"It's useless, no matter how talented he is. There were many who were even more talented than he is, but they didn't choose this job. So who is he to choose this job? Think about it. Who were the three who succeeded in this job? They were all Divine Level Warriors."

"Fang Xingjian is Old Huang's disciple after all, and the Headmaster would need to give him face."

"I reckon that in the end, he'll still need to choose from one of the seventeen jobs. Windstorm Sword Hero... This is ridiculous."

At the same time, in the office, Huang Lin was seated casually on the sofa, and opposite to him there was a white-haired amiable-

looking old man who was slowly sipping and enjoying a cup of tea.

“Lin, it’s been some time since I’ve had some of your tea. It really does taste different.”

Huang Lin coldly said, “You drink milk tea everyday and rarely have a sip of green tea. Of course you’d find it fragrant.”

“Hehe, weren’t we in the same class back then? Do you have to keep me at an arm’s length?” The white-haired old man was KIRST Royal Academy’s current Headmaster.

He looked at Huang Lin and grinned, saying, “I’m here today just because of you.”

“Me?” Huang Lin’s eyebrows twitched. It was as if sharp streams of sword Qi were passing through every inch of space in the office.

The Headmaster wiped the sweat off his forehead and said, “Don’t be agitated, don’t be agitated.”

Huang Lin gave a cold snort and said, “I’ve said it before. Ever since that event, no one should ever think of messing around before me.”

Hearing Huang Lin’s words, the Headmaster let out a sigh, put the teacup down on the table, no longer keeping up the pretense of smiling.

He frowned, saying, “Do you really think that Fang Xingjian can go through the job transition successfully and become a Windstorm Sword Hero? You should know how difficult it is to transition to such a rare job.”

“With his talent, I trust that he has a success rate of 40%.”

“40%?” The Headmaster calmly said, “To be able to learn the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth within six hours, it should be more than just 40%, right?”

Huang Lin’s eyes froze, and the Headmaster waved his hand and said, “Don’t stare at me like that. If you think that you’re able to

hide such small matters from me, then I can forget about holding on to this Headmaster position. Don't worry, I haven't reported this to the higher levels.

“But you must understand, once he succeeds in becoming a Windstorm Sword Hero, there's no way for us to keep it hidden.

“Someone who can succeed in transitioning to such a rare job for his first job transition... Many would set their sights on him.”

“Which strong Warrior hasn't gone through trials?” Huang Lin's eyes burned as he spoke, “Moreover, this is no longer the generation we were born in. It's a Windstorm Sword Hero we're talking about. The Knight Association will not let them have their way.

“Moreover, I've said it before, even if I were to die, I'll definitely not let that kind of thing happen again.”

“Since you have decided, there's nothing more I can say.”

“But you must remember, I'll only let him waste three months. Three months later, if he does not succeed, he'll have to choose a proper job for his transition.

“This is the greatest concession I can give.” The Headmaster shook his head. There was nothing he could do to this old pal of his. They knew each other too well, and he knew that once the other party had made up his mind, it would be extremely hard to change it. Moreover, he also did not wish to make things difficult for the other party, thus he could only agree with it for now.

...

The next day, Fang Xingjian was called to the office very early in the morning. The instructors who were present were all looking at him strangely.

Fang Xingjian ignored them, knocked on the door, and entered Huang Lin's office.

“Teacher.”

Huang Lin nodded, looked at Fang Xingjian, laughed and said, “I thought that it would be a waste for you to take up one of those generic jobs, but I didn’t think that you would choose a rare job by yourself. Do you know how difficult it is to become a Windstorm Sword Hero? How confident are you?”

“I have 70% confidence.”

“What are your challenges?” Huang Lin asked.

Fang Xingjian knew that this was not the time to be modest. Thus, he gave it some thought before saying, “I don’t have 100% confidence for the Perfect Muscles specialty. If this specialty is an inborn specialty, then I’ll definitely not be able to succeed in becoming a Windstorm Sword Hero. Therefore, I’d like to meet someone with this speciality.”

Huang Lin nodded and said, “Carry on.”

“The other thing would be the Mistral Windgod’s Waves and Ice Age Meditation Art. I have no idea about these two. It would be best if there was someone who could guide me through them.”

Huang Lin said, “The Perfect Muscles Specialty is too rare, and it is impossible for me to find you one upon request. I can only try my best to get people to look for one.

“As for the Waves, I know of a person who is trained in the Mistral Windgod’s Waves. I’ll get him to give you a one-time lesson.”

As he said this, Huang Lin’s gaze became increasingly stern. “But there’s one thing you must remember. If you don’t meet all the prerequisites for the job transition, I will not let you go forward with it. After three months, if you are still completely lost, I won’t let you waste any more time. After that, you’ll need to immediately choose from one of the seventeen jobs.

“Is this clear?”

“No problem.” Fang Xingjian replied.

“Then that’s fine. You can take your leave. There’s no need for you to attend the remaining classes. You can take charge of your own time daily. Just let me know directly if you need anything else.”

Fang Xingjian did not leave right away, but requested, “Teacher, can you give me guidance on a few sets of sword techniques of the Nurturing Path and Training Path?”

Fang Xingjian was in a race against time. Although he knew that he would be fast enough to pick up sword techniques by himself, if he could receive guidance from an expert like Huang Lin, it was obvious that his learning speed could be hastened even further.

Therefore, the following mornings, Fang Xingjian practiced techniques in both the Nurturing and Training Paths under Huang Lin’s guidance, accumulating and depleting potential in order to build on his attributes.

In the afternoon, he practiced the basic sword techniques of Tempest Overlord, Gale Sword Deity and Aurora Sword Spirit.

At night, he studied Waves and mental cultivation methods, and also tried to figure out the biographies of the three powerhouses.

Under Huang Lin’s guidance, he would need to learn new Nurturing and Training techniques almost everyday, endlessly absorbing various sword techniques as if he was hungry and thirsty for them.

Fang Xingjian’s talent was extraordinary to begin with, but now, with the support of the specialty Genius Swordsmanship and because of the escalating number of sword techniques which he had picked up, his sword arts experience continued to increase. Furthermore, he also received help from Huang Lin. With all these, the rate of progression in his sword training broke records once again.

For the various sword techniques which were at the same standard as the Grizzly Bear Sword Technique and the Eagle Sword Technique, he would be able to reach level 10 within one to two days. As for the techniques affecting the organs which were similar to the Nine Yang Divine Sword Technique and the Descent of Holy Light, he would need no longer than three to four days to reach level 10.

Although Fang Xingjian tried his best to be secretive, Huang Lin was under the impression that Fang Xingjian had reached level 5 or 6 within one or two days. However, no matter how hard Fang Xingjian tried to hide and explained that he had been practicing sword techniques daily, not daring to reveal the fact that he was doing other things in the afternoon and at night, Huang Lin was still shocked by his progress.

Chapter 48 Job Transition

Ten days later, in front of a cave's entrance in the academy's eastern wing, the seven students of Class 256 were all waiting.

The cave was like the big demon's mouth, facing the seven students, seemingly preparing to swallow the whole world. From outside, the cave looked pitch black without a tinge of light, as if it was hiding all the chaos in the world.

This was one of the secret realms in KIRST Royal Knight Academy.

In front of the secret realm, Barbara, Ferdinand, and the other aristocrats looked at the pitch black cave, each of them with complicated looks on their faces. Some of them were amazed, some were astonished, some hopeful, and some wore killing auras.

None of them would have thought that ten days after they had submitted their application forms, Kaunitz would submit a request to enter the secret realm so that he would undergo his first job transition. This was simply unbelievable.

“Do you guys think that he can succeed?” said Barbara furrowing her brows tightly. “Complete the job transition in just ten days? Is Tresia Clan's preparation so complete?”

Although they did not have as much inside information as the Empire had, having inherited information from generations and generations of mediocre aristocratic clans on their side, they had their fair share of research and information.

It was obvious that Kaunitz started to prepare for the first job transition long before even entering the Prefectural Selection. And clearly, this job was one of the seventeen provided by the school.

One could only imagine the price that Tresia had paid in order to get access to information regarding the first transition, thus being able to prepare Kaunitz since childhood. This allowed him to meet the requirements for the job transition in just ten days after

choosing, allowing him to enter the secret realm in order to undergo the transition process.

Hearing Barbara's question, Ferdinand, dressed in a white suit coldly said, "Without absolute confidence, Kaunitz would not enter. However, to be able to complete the job transition within ten days... This must have already broken the records in Kirst Knight Academy, right?"

At that moment, Dick's voice rang out, "He really will have broken the records, as long as he succeeds..." As Class 256's instructor, he was naturally concerned for Kaunitz's results, especially since they would affect his own performance appraisal in the academy.

At the same time, Dick was overjoyed to see Kaunitz's performance. To him, students such as him, from aristocratic clans and with a docile attitude, were the most outstanding ones.

Comparatively, Fang Xingjian's actions had made him burn with anger. Not only did Fang Xingjian treat his own future like a child's play, he had even affected the results of his instructor's performance appraisal.

From the side, Barbara asked, "Teacher, what about Fang Xingjian? Is he still aiming for the Windstorm Sword Hero?"

Dick's face turned grim as he said, "The Headmaster has given him three months.... Hmph, if not for the fact that this rascal had gotten Lord Huang Lin's appreciation, how would he still be allowed to mess around. This is simply unacceptable."

Barbara smiled and said, "Haha, this poor chap really doesn't know any better. Teacher, no need to be angry at him. When he realises that he's unable to complete in the transition, he will naturally become crestfallen. And then he'll choose his job properly."

A cold flicker shone in Dick's eyes. He had disliked Fang Xingjian

from the bottom of his heart, from the first moment he had laid eyes on him. Many events ever since had also proven that the other party was trouble. Big trouble.

However, luck had it that this trouble got himself an amazing teacher. In fact, if not for Huang Lin, he would have forced Fang Xingjian to choose his job properly and would not have let him fool around, talking about Windstorm Sword Hero.

On the other hand, although Jack and Anthony were from commoner families and were not actually close with Kaunitz, since he was the first person to go to the secret realm and to go through the job transition, they obviously wanted to take a look for themselves, and thus accumulate some experience for their own future transitions.

Jack's eyes were fixed on the secret realm's entrance as he said, "Do you think that Kaunitz will succeed? Ten days... Completing the transition in merely ten days?"

"I think it's likely that he will succeed." Anthony let out a sigh and said, "These aristocrats are rich in resources, and just by getting those few Knights from their clan to plan out his training schedule for years ahead, it's already enough for him to get a much better head start than us."

Although the Empire forbid all Knights to divulge information relation to job transitions, Knights giving pointers to their juniors were not included under this clause. Even the Knight Association would not step in. It was considered an unspoken rule amongst the Empire's aristocratic powers.

Amidst everyone's chatterings, a great explosive sound rang out, a great tremor came all the way to their feet, and a raging wind blew from the cave's entrance. The strong wind was like a grade ten tornado, so strong that many people could not keep their eyes open.

Dick was the only one who stood there, unwavering, his eyes

wide open, staring in the direction of the cave.

As Class 256's instructor, he was also a Knight who had completed his first job transition long ago, and he had the basic ability which all Knights who had undergone their first transitions had, namely Reduced Force Field.

Such a force field was made from applying waves and mental cultivation methods to communicate with the ether particles which were everywhere. It allowed one to transmit one's own physical strength anywhere within a ten meter range, forming a force field. However, with the fading of the Waves during transmission, such an ability could at most display only half of the person's strength.

Putting up a force field as a barrier before him, Dick was not affected by the raging winds in the least, and he saw Kaunitz's figure gradually come out from the secret realm.

"He's out!"

"Has he succeeded?"

"Has he completed the first transition?"

Everyone had their gazes fixed on Kaunitz, who had just stepped out of the secret realm. A proud smile broke out on the latter's face.

After exiting the secret realm, Kaunitz stretched out his palm towards Jack and Anthony, and with a light grasp the two of them flew up in midair, as if they had been wrapped by a big invisible hand and then lifted up.

"Succeeded?"

"It's Reduced Force Field!"

Jack hollered, "Kaunitz, what are you doing?!"

"Are you crazy?" Anthony asked. "It is forbidden for students to attack each other in the academy."

“Hmph hmph.” Kaunitz gave a cold snort and with a wave of his palm, he tossed the two of them to the ground, bruising them.

Looking at the two’s infuriated gazes, he calmly said, “I’m only trying out my abilities after going through the job transition.”

Dick smiled and walked over, giving Kaunitz a hug and saying, “Congratulations. You are the fastest person to ever complete the first transition in the academy’s entire history.”

Afterwards, he turned towards Jack, Anthony and the others and continued, “You guys must learn from Kaunitz. Don’t be like some people who indulge in wishful thinking all the time.”

A cold smile appeared in the corner of Kaunitz’s lips, and he looked at Jack and said, “You two can go tell Fang Xingjian that I’ve completed my first transition. I’m looking forward to teaching him a good lesson in two and a half months.

“He’ll learn who is the one who truly deserves the Prefectural Champion title, and who is the true genius.”

After this, the group made a proud exit, leaving Jack and Anthony looking at each other in dismay.

Much later, Jack asked, “Do you remember what was the first transition job that Kaunitz applied for?”

Anthony swallowed and said, “Six Armed Asura. The requirements are that all attributes have to be at least 30 points. One must have three specific specialities, namely Multitask, Invertebrato¹ and Extreme Eruption. And on top of that, one must know over ten sets of sword techniques.”

“Out of the seventeen, it is the job with the highest attack power.”

[1] Invertebrato - Soft and boneless as though it were an invertebrate

Chapter 49 Rumors

Five days later, Huang Lin's private training grounds.

Two swords clashed, making a sound so loud that it was as if an explosion had just occurred. Fang Xingjian consistently retreated, yet continued to hold his stance against the immense force. A satisfied grin broke out on Huang Lin's face, and a tinge of content appeared in his gaze.

"This is truly unbelievable. Xingjian, with your talent, in the future you'll definitely be one of the top swordsmen in the world."

Fang Xingjian exhaled briefly, expelling the foul air in his chest and replied, "Thank you for your guidance, teacher."

"No need to thank me. Your talent..." Huang Lin shook his head and said, "Remember, definitely don't reveal your talent to other people... Sigh, but if you really were to become a Windstorm Sword Hero, it would not matter anymore."

"Alright, I've taught you all the basic sword techniques I could. The rest is up to you and your training. To reach level 6 for eight sets of sword techniques in only fifteen days... You really are a talent in sword arts. You must treasure your talent."

Fang Xingjian nodded, thinking to himself that if the other party were to know that his actual achievements in the past fifteen days, he would probably be in so much shock that his eyeballs would pop out. He had reach level 10 for eight nurturing sword techniques. Out of these, five of them having no overlaps, which implicitly brought him quite a lot of additional increments to his attributes.

Other than this, from Huang Ling he had also learned a training technique specializing in increasing the reaction attribute, the Meteor Sword Technique. At night, he would take time to practice this technique, depleting all his potential for this set of sword technique, thus managing to bring his Meteor Sword Technique to

level 20, which brought him an additional 4 point increase to his reaction attribute.

In addition, Fang Xingjian's large consumption of potential points on the Meteor Sword Technique also increased his reaction by an additional 6 points.

These were only the sword techniques he had learned from Huang Lin. Other than these, he had also spent the afternoons studying the three Divine Level Warriors' basic sword techniques, training all four sets of sword techniques to level 10, two of which had brought him additional increments to his attributes.

The more sword techniques Fang Xingjian picked up, the fewer he would find which were not repetitive in nature, but able to effectively increase his potential and provide additional increases for his attributes.

Therefore, Fang Xingjian's attributes had changed to:

Name

Fang Xingjian

Age

16

Occupation

Warrior's Squire

Level

9

Strength

40

Agility

45

Reaction

36

Endurance

33

Flexibility

34

Nurturing Sword Techniques

20 sets

Training Sword Techniques

3 sets

Specialities:

Genius Swordsmanship,

Elementary Survival Instinct,

Internal Healing,

Internal Training,

Sword Specialist

With that, he took a big step closer towards meeting the requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero's attributes, namely over 45 points in strength, over 60 points in agility, over 45 points in reaction, over 35 points in endurance, and over 35 points in flexibility.

He was 5 points away from the strength requirements, 15 points away for agility, 9 points for reaction, 2 points for endurance, and 1 point for flexibility.

And now, with so many sets of sword techniques, the maximum amount of potential points he could accumulate each day had increased to 5000 points. However, after breaking through the 30 point mark for the reaction attribute, now he was only able to increase his reaction by a tiny bit even if he depleted 30,000

potential points every six days.

After completing the sword techniques training in the morning, and having completed his daily assignments for training his attributes, Fang Xingjian went to Huang Lin's residence to join him for lunch.

Both of them were powerful Warriors, well-trained both internally and externally, with extremely strong organs and with the 'Internal Training' specialty. Therefore, both of them had extremely big appetites. For them, the amount of food an ordinary strong man would usually have was mostly digested after stuffing down a few mouthfuls, chewing and then compressing the food with their organs.

After finishing the meal, Huang Lin drank a cup of tea and, seemingly unintentionally, he said, "There seems to be a lot of rumors flying about in the academy recently."

Fang Xingjian went blank for a short moment. He knew what the other party was referring to. After he had started an all-out training for the Windstorm Sword Hero, various rumors about him had been started in the academy.

And with Kaunitz taking the lead in completing the first transition five days ago, thus becoming the fastest Knight in the academy's history to have completed the first transition, the rumors flourished even faster and fiercer.

The fiercest one of them all said that Fang Xingjian did not deserve to receive the title of Prefectural Championship. It was said that he had known Huang Lin before the selection and had acknowledged Huang Lin as his master, and thus Huang Lin had went through the backdoor for him, robbing Kaunitz of the first place.

Of course, Kaunitz was meant to get the second place, but Fang Xingjian had held hatred for Kaunitz for thrashing him so many days in The School of Sword Arts. Therefore, he had encouraged

Huang Lin to take revenge for him, pushing down Kaunitz's ranking.

Another one said that Fang Xingjian was arrogant and conceited, and having chosen the Windstorm Sword Hero, he was bound to fail. He would definitely not be able to attain the requirements and would eventually return crestfallen, and end up choosing a normal job.

There was almost no one who thought that Fang Xingjian would be able to successfully transition into a Windstorm Sword Hero. And because many students thought that Fang Xingjian had gone through the backdoor and had pushed down Kaunitz's rankings, their impressions of him were very bad.

Other similar rumors flying around mostly came from Kaunitz and the other aristocrats. It was obvious that they wanted to affect Fang Xingjian through the rumors, and bring him down.

It was a pity that due to the Headmaster's and Huang Lin's consecutive orders for the instructors in the Sword and Sabers Department, telling them not to divulge Fang Xingjian's talent, the students were completely unaware of the news that Fang Xingjian had picked up the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth in a mere six hours.

Of course, what actually happened was that Fang Xingjian had picked up both the Hegemonic Qi Slash of Heavens and Earth and the Nine-Headed Dragon Sword. However, Fang Xingjian was the only one who knew this.

Hearing Huang Lin's question, Fang Xingjian replied, "I don't care about it. No matter how much they talk about it, it won't affect me."

"It's fine if that's the case," Huang Lin said. "Remember. Training is for yourself. It is not meant for bullying others, not meant for proving yourself to others, not meant to convince others, or to show off to others."

“From beginning to the end, training is only for yourself. Don’t be affected by others’ words and mess up your own rhythm.”

“Kaunitz’s talent is definitely outstanding, and with the vast amount of resources his clan has invested in him, it is to be expected that he is able to complete the job transition so quickly. Don’t be thinking about comparing with him, and get affected by those thoughts.”

“I understand,” replied Fang Xingjian in a humble tone.

“Alright, I’m done with imparting the sword techniques to you. There is no need for you to come again from tomorrow onwards. With regards to the Waves, I’ve already found the person for the job. He will be coming to teach you in a few days’ time.”

Fang Xingjian’s gaze flickered, and a tinge of expectation flashed in his eyes. If it could be said that the training for his attributes was smooth sailing, and that he had managed to grasp some hints with regards to the profoundness of the Perfect Muscles the Tempest Overlord and others had, then for the past 15 days, he’d had no progress whatsoever in the training for the Mistral Windgod’s Waves and Ice Age Meditation. It was because Waves and mental cultivation methods were not sword arts, and his sword arts talent was useless for this.

Finally, someone proficient in this set of Waves could teach him now. How could he not be filled with expectation?

After lunch, Fang Xingjian left Huang Lin’s residence and gradually headed for his own villa.

The issue with his attributes were not significant. He reckoned that after another twenty to thirty days, he would be able to master all the sword techniques he was learning to the maximum level. With the attributes increment brought by these sword techniques, in addition to the potential he had been depleting for the past twenty to thirty days, it ought to be sufficient for him in order to meet the attribute requirements.

However, from now on there would be less and less sword techniques which could bring him additional attribute increases. In the future, he would need to depend on his potential in training his attributes, and the speed of their increase would be get slower and slower.

Now, the crux was finding out the secret to obtain the Perfect Muscles, as well as for the Waves and mental cultivation methods.

‘Perfect Muscles... Perfect Muscles...’

Fang Xingjian started to contemplate the three powerful Warriors’ secret. Based on the historical records the three powerhouses had not displayed extraordinary talent when they had been young, whether it was Tempest Overlord, Gale Sword Deity, or Aurora Sword Spirit.

The time when they had actually stood out was after having transitioned into Windstorm Sword Heroes.

It might have been that they had not had sufficient talent, since out of the three, the youngest one of them was already thirty-six years old when he had become a Windstorm Sword Hero. It was obvious that it had taken a lot of their time to fulfill the series of requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero. After they had completed the first transition, many of their generation had already reached the pinnacle of the first transition, had undergone the second transition, or had even reached the pinnacle of the second transition.

It was impossible for the academy to provide Fang Xingjian with resources for a few years or even decades. Only those from the main factions, or only the great aristocrats would be able to ensure such treatments for their members, and to spend such great amount of time and resources for their job transitions.

Concerning the ordinary Knights from the academy, there was a limit to the free resources they were entitled to.

‘Therefore, although the first-generation Emperor started the Empire’s Selection to connect people from different hierarchical backgrounds, when it comes down to it, only the Royal family, the major aristocrats, and the great factions would have the resources to create top notch job holders. The most precious, rarest, and strongest jobs are mostly in the grasp of these groups.

‘Ordinary people could soar towards success only if they were geniuses of talent that maybe one in ten thousand had. For the others, no matter how much effort they put in, it was possible that they would stay in mediocre management positions for all their lives, working for those in the higher levels. The small group of geniuses who were able to overcome this stump would be eradicated or forced to conform. Whichever it was, there was no way that they would be able to affect the Empire’s domination... It was just like how a small aristocratic clan such as the Tresia Clan had risen in importance due to the appearance of a genius of an early generation. However, despite the fact that so many years had already passed, they had not been able to become part of the Empire’s higher management.

‘So long as the Empire continues to be the one to grasp the most resources, the most information regarding jobs, and the most Knights, there is no way to break out of this situation.’

Fang Xingjian had a basic degree of understanding regarding the Empire’s and the aristocratic clans’ policies.

What he could do now was to rely solely on his talent in order to become a Windstorm Sword Hero within three months’ time, thus performing a feat which would take others ten or twenty years to accomplish.

Others in the academy considered this fully impossible.

‘After the Knights had successfully gone through the first transition, it was said that they had all revealed great talent in the Waves area.

‘If it’s not an inborn speciality, could it be related to their sword arts?’ Fang Xingjian continued to recall the sword techniques he had been learning all this time. ‘What is the secret behind this? I’ve learned all their sword techniques, and they are not much different from those of The School of Sword Arts, except regarding the areas that the techniques are training. How on earth did they get the specialty Perfect Muscles?’

As he thought about this, he headed to his own villa and started a new round of practice, starting to learn the three powerhouses’ basic sword techniques.

Chapter 50 Emotions

The following few days, Fang Xingjian started practicing the Nurturing techniques every morning. After completing the training for all Nurturing techniques and after squeezing out all the potential points he could squeeze, he would start practicing the Meteor Sword Technique in order to raise his reaction attribute.

Even with his talent, by the time he finished practicing the set, it was already noon.

After eating ferocious beasts and various medicinal food, Fang Xingjian would nap for half an hour. This was meant to rest his heart, internal organs and brain, keeping them in good shape and giving him more energy for the rest of the afternoon.

In the afternoon, he practiced the sword techniques in which the Tempest Overlord and the others had trained before their first job transitions. He had learnt an additional six techniques, which in all made ten. However the newer techniques had yet to reach level 10, and goodness knows which ones would provide him with attributes increases.

He looked in detail at the basic sword techniques that the Tempest Overlord, Gale Sword Deity and Aurora Sword Spirit had trained in. In total there were fifteen basic sword techniques. They had each practiced five sets of techniques before their first job transitions.

‘Five sets of sword techniques?’ Fang Xingjian mumbled. ‘Why do they all happen to be five sets?’

Fang Xingjian had thoroughly researched these before. There were no duplicates among the five sets that each of them had trained. All of these sword techniques specifically focused on training different parts of the body, in accuracy.

In other words, be it Tempest Overlord, Gale Sword Deity or

Aurora Sword Spirit, when they were young, before their first job transitions, they had deliberately chosen five sets that would cover the training of their entire body, and yet would not overlap with each other.

All the time that Fang Xingjian had spent training... Although he felt that the secret of Perfect Muscles was hidden within these sword techniques, he had not been able to discover the actual clue even after all this time had passed.

Another afternoon passed, and when it was time for dinner, Jack and Anthony knocked on the door and entered, led by the maid.

Spotting Jack's bruises and swollen face, Fang Xingjian asked, "Were you beaten up by them again?"

Seeing that Jack was silent, Anthony shrugged and replied, "Ever since Kaunitz completed his first job transition, they have been increasingly arrogant. The commoners in the academy are few, and they don't even dare to resist when they come across the nobles..."

"What nobles?" Jack chided. "Were there not farmers or hunters amongst their ancestors? No commoners? Which family or clan didn't start out as commoners?"

"But they're not commoners now." Anthony sighed.

Fang Xingjian told the maid, "Serve the dishes."

Watching the dishes being served one after another, Jack and Anthony stopped quarreling immediately, their eyes lighting up. "Master Huang Lin is really good to you. He increased the share of ferocious beasts again, didn't he?"

Anthony said, a little embarrassed, "We come so frequently for meals... Will Master Huang Lin be unhappy?"

Jack grabbed a piece of roasted meat and began eating, mumbling with his mouth full, "It's fine. There's so much food that Xingjian won't be able to finish all of it anyway."

While eating, Fang Xingjian asked, “Who beat you up this time?”

“A few guys from the previous batch. They told us to stop looking for you.” Jack spoke fiercely. “Isn’t it just that they’ve become a Knight one year earlier than me? Why should I listen to them? Let me tell you...”

Anthony said, “It’s a good thing that the academy doesn’t allow private dueling. They can only bully you during the martial technique lessons.”

He had heard from Jack and Anthony that they had been constantly bullied by the nobles for the past few days. During this time, since Fang Xingjian did not even step out of the house nor did he go out for lessons, the nobles could only cause trouble for Anthony and Jack, since they were closer to Fang Xingjian.

As he listened, Fang Xingjian felt something strange stirring in his emotions.

He was still trying to gradually sort out the change in his emotions. ‘This feeling... Is it hatred? Pain?’

After dinner, Jack and Anthony left. Fang Xingjian lied on the sofa, thinking, ‘By right, my emotions should all have been stripped off. For this half a year, I have not felt any feelings of friendship, love, kinship...’

Indeed, be it Kyle, or Vivian from The School of Sword Arts, or Jack, or Anthony, or even Huang Lin, in his heart, Fang Xingjian had never treated them as people close to him, even though he had pretended to be like an ordinary person.

However, recently he had been practicing the Waves and mental cultivation methods. Mental cultivation methods guided one’s thoughts and emotions, and after some research, he had felt something wrong weird stirring up in his emotions.

He realised that even though he could not love nor feel friendship or kinship, he could still feel fury, enmity, and hatred.

This was why he had been treating Jack and the others to meals the past few days. He was trying to sense the minute changes in his emotions.

‘Which means that, even though my positive feelings were taken away, my negative emotions were left behind?’

Fang Xingjian slowly drank the medicinal wine in the bottle, as scenes from Demonic City surfaced in his mind, one after another.

Li Shuanghua’s expressions and cruel words; the difficult times and contemptuous looks he had experienced since young; Caroline’s torment, humiliation, maltreatment... All these appeared in his mind, one scene after another.

In that instant, all the muscles in Fang Xingjian’s body tensed up, trickles of blood popping up in his eyes, as if he were a raging wild beast. Green veins popped out from his two arms, neck and forehead.

His consciousness was almost drowned in feelings of vengeance, fury, unlimited rage and hatred.

The next moment, with an angry bellow, he stood up. The table and chairs before him had already been shattered into pieces.

“Li Shuanghua... Caroline...”

Gritting his teeth and spitting out these two names, Fang Xingjian breathed in with deep gulps, gradually suppressing his anger only after a long while.

Next, Kaunitz’s voice flashed across in his mind, and with a cold grunt, a murderous glint flashed in his eyes. He had gained full control of his negative emotions.

At a clap of his hands, a maid came to clean up the room. Fang Xingjian headed towards the training room. It was time to practice Waves and mental cultivation methods.

Sitting on the floor, Fang Xingjian held a Mistral Windgod's

Waves' secret training manual in his hands.

'Waves' was the term for the rhythm in which humans breathed and their blood flowed. As long as one could control the rhythm of one's breathing and blood flow, one would be able to make changes to the intrinsic qualities of one's body. From there, people would then be able to communicate with ether particles in the secret realm, and thus gain all sorts of unbelievable powers.

Reading once again through the warnings for practicing the Mistral Windgod's Waves, Fang Xingjian sat on the floor with his legs crossed, his breathing gradually slowing down, slower and slower, slow yet unbroken, faintly discernible.

Every time he breathed, his stomach swelled slightly, his four limbs tensed up, the muscles in his palms and soles contracted, and when they bulged his entire body spread out like a tent.

Each of his breaths had to be part of the rhythm of his breathing as he channeled energy throughout his whole body, changing his physical body little by little.

At the same time, the muscles and veins in his body trembled all at once, continuously leaping. His heart was beating furiously, as if someone was playing drums in the room.

This was him agitating the blood through physical strength, and in turn, controlling the rhythm of the blood flow in every part of his body.

After a good long while, Fang Xingjian's head was covered with an abnormal amount of perspiration. He spat out a mouthful of foul air.

One hour had passed. This was the longest period of time he had been able to hold on to the state of the Waves.

For one to truly connect Waves, one had to maintain this state twenty-four hours around the clock, be it sitting, lying down, walking, battling or resting, and then change the intrinsic qualities

of life completely, little by little.

It was obvious that Fang Xingjian had no talent in Waves cultivation, or rather that he had only mediocre talent for it.

As he completed a cycle of Waves cultivation, a man's voice resounded, his words filled with disdain and contempt.

“With your talent, you definitely won't be able to master the Mistral Windgod's Waves even if you were to cultivate for another year.”

Chapter 51 Waves and Mental Cultivation Methods

Fang Xingjian's eyes burst open, filled with murderous intent. Goodness knows when he had appeared, but a man shrouded in darkness stood before him.

If not for the man having spoken, Fang Xingjian would not have noticed that he was right in front of him.

“Who are you?”

Fang Xingjian turned serious, his right hand slowly creeping towards the longsword at his waist.

The man exuded an air of unfathomable vastness and depth. Merely staring at him took Fang Xingjian half of his energy. The way he sent prickles down Fang Xingjian's back in particular made the latter feel as if the man would lash out anytime, giving him the illusion that each strike would tear him into pieces.

He knew that the opponent was one of the strongest he had met ever since he had come to Miracle World. Even Huang Lin, who had taught him sword arts everyday, might not be stronger than him. The pressure this man gave out was much much greater than the one made by Huang Lin.

Seeing that Fang Xingjian was on his guard as if he had encountered a formidable enemy, the man only sniggered coldly, saying, “I've only been asked by Huang Lin to teach you Waves and mental cultivation methods. You don't need to know who I am. I'm just returning a favour. After tonight, there will be nothing between us.”

Hearing this, Fang Xingjian slightly relaxed, although in his heart he was still very much on his guard.

The man did not pay him any heed, and continued, “Waves and mental cultivation methods. One is internal and the other

external, one uses the physical body and the other uses mental energy. They are techniques created to find a good fit with ether particles, in order to change the essence of human life.

“Ether particles exist in every corner of the world, connecting different time and spaces, and encompassing infinite energy. They correspond with every other matter, whether in heaven or on earth.

“Hence, different combinations of Waves and mental cultivation methods will allow one to come into contact with different ether particles, thus becoming able to unleash different powers. Basic types can enhance the self, while special types can control ice, fire, thunder and electricity, or change the geomagnetism et cetera. They each have different uses.

“Humans first connected with ether particles in the secret realm, through Waves and mental cultivation methods, and then combined them with different attributes, specialities, and techniques in order to achieve different transition jobs. They would thus attain greater attributes, stronger specialties, and more powerful techniques.

“In order to understand Waves, one has to control the breathing process and the blood flow, basically changing his living rhythm. Your skills are so-so, but your understanding of the Mistral Windgod’s Waves is simply horrid.”

The man continued, full of scorn, “I’ve been observing you for the past few nights. Your problem lies in the fact that your mental cultivation methods do not match your Waves.

“From the beginning, you’ve been blindly imitating.”

“Mental cultivation methods?” Fang Xingjian defiantly said. “While practicing Waves daily, I have been maintaining the realm of the Ice Age Meditation Art, and my breathing and blood flow were also maintained in the rhythm of Mistral Windgod’s Waves. What is the problem here?”

“Haha, really?” the man asked. “Fish can stay underwater for twenty-four hours. Can humans do the same? Plants can stay rooted in the ground all day long, all year around, but can humans do so?”

“Humans cannot, unless they change their own life’s characteristics.”

“The same goes for Waves and mental cultivation methods. What you are doing now is forcefully immersing yourself in water, forcefully rooting your feet into the ground. It may seem like you have learnt Waves, but in reality you are completely ignorant.”

“Learning Waves and mental cultivation methods requires you to change your life’s characteristics, accept new characteristics, and not just simply pretend and imitate.”

The man saw the blank look on Fang Xingjian’s face, shook his head, and sighed. “Blockhead. Huang Lin said you were actually intelligent?”

Ever since Fang Xingjian had come to the Other World, he had been endlessly praised by people saying that he was blessed with great talent and genius in sword arts. This was the first time he had been called dumb. But he knew that other than sword arts, he was indeed mediocre in other domains. He was not mad. He merely asked, “Then what should I do?”

“What can you do? I don’t want to be wasting too much time on you, so I will transfer one stream of my Waves to you. Before this Wave disappears, you can carefully comprehend it, slowly closing in on the rhythm of Mistral Windgod.”

“Remember, don’t try to imitate all of the characteristics at once. Trim the edges and corners today, change a few strands of hair tomorrow. Bit by bit, truly change your rhythm, truly change your breathing and blood so that they all become the Mistral Windgod’s Waves.”

He did not give Fang Xingjian much time to consider before he thrust his finger. Fang Xingjian did not feel the slightest movement of air currents, nor could he even see the shadow of the other party's finger before it landed on his head.

The next moment, surges of Waves gushed out from the tip of his fingers, and immediately travelled through all parts of Fang Xingjian's body, spurring all of his breath and blood flow towards the direction of the Mistral Windgod's Waves.

However, such a thorough inversion of his breathing and blood flow made Fang Xingjian feel extreme agony. The veins on his forehead popped out. He felt as if his body, both inside and outside, was being stabbed and torn apart by countless small knives.

Looking at how much agony Fang Xingjian was in, the man chuckled and said, "Relax, this stream of Wave will disappear only after more than ten days. You still have a long time to slowly experience and comprehend it.

"For the rest of the night, I'll transfer you the Ice Age Meditation Art. You better carefully comprehend it."

While Fang Xingjian was tolerating the pain, the man had started talking, and his every word and his every sentence was like monstrous sounds piercing through Fang Xingjian's ears, penetrating all barriers to reach his ear. Although he was in extreme agony, he was still able to hear every word, and he ingrained everything in his mind.

"Remember. Mental cultivation methods change the way humans think. They transform one's mode and way of thinking from top to bottom.

"The speed of the Windstorm Sword Hero is unrivalled, hence the need for the Ice Age Meditation Art to cool the heart, calm the mind, in order to maintain absolute rationale and calm at all times.

"Envision your thoughts as being as cold as a machine, as harsh

as winter. No matter the situation, no matter who your enemy is, or how painful it is, you have to control your thoughts and maintain absolute peace of mind.

“Now, follow what I say. Learn to calm your heart and to reflect on your thoughts. When you notice yourself thinking about anything, stop it and cut off that distraction.

“If you can cut off all distractions as you wish, it means that you have achieved the basic success required for the Ice Age Meditation Art.

“The flesh affects the mind, and the mind in turn influences the flesh. Only through interaction from both inside and out and through uniform movement can you achieve the Waves and mental cultivation techniques.”

“Cut... off... distractions...”

Fang Xingjian’s heart was entirely filled with agony, fury, desires for revenge, and he forced himself to not think about those. But the more he tried to stop himself from thinking of them, the wilder those thoughts resurfaced, over and over again.

When the man saw Fang Xingjian’s twisted face, he laughed and said, “Take it slow. The beginning is always the toughest.”

Fang Xingjian spent the whole night drowned in physical pain and mental frustrations. Everytime he felt that he had reached a limit in his frustration, as if his entire body was itchy and he wanted to stand up and fling his four limbs about crazily, the man’s huge hand would press down on his body, forcing him down on the same spot and making him unable to move an inch. He could only tolerate this stage of emotional turmoil.

After tolerating time and time again, he felt as if the physical pain had lessened a little, and that the infinite surges of distractions, worries, fury and vengeance had also been slightly reduced.

It was not until the sky had lit up that the man allowed him to stand and move his muscles.

Fang Xingjian nodded towards the man and said, “Thank you. If you have any problems in the future...”

He wanted to be polite, but the man waved his hand and interrupted, “Your talent is too weak, and the distractions in your mind are ten times that of an ordinary man’s. The probability of you becoming a Windstorm Sword Hero is less than one in ten thousand.

“Rather than thinking of helping me, you’d be better off thinking about how to overcome this trial before you.”

From his words, it was clear that he did not think well of the current Fang Xingjian. The next moment, the man’s silhouette disappeared like the dissipating snow.

Chapter 52 Negative Side

In the following days, Fang Xingjian completely stopped his sword techniques practice. He spent about twenty hours or more per day to comprehend the Waves that the mysterious man had left in his body, relentlessly killing off all the distracting thoughts that appeared in his mind.

And because the man had left a sample of the Waves within his body, he was able to use it as a reference to aid him in his learning. Thus, his comprehension of the Waves was progressing very quickly, especially due to the fact that he was circulating the rhythm of the Mistral Windgod's Wave almost twenty-four hours a day. His life characteristics did indeed gradually undergo a gradual transformation, getting closer and closer to the Mistral Windgod's Wave.

Just as the man had explained, Fang Xingjian had too many distracting thoughts. After four to five days, other than the night that he had first started on, he felt that the rate of improvement in his mental cultivation arts had been getting slower and slower. Not only was his heart unable to calm down, it actually did the contrary of what he intended, as it filled up with more and more frustrations.

“Ah!”

At this moment, he only felt that his heart was akin to a lump of burning embers. The faces of Li Shuanghua, Caroline and Kaunitz kept floating in his mind. The next moment, he abruptly stood up, a long cry escaping from his mouth, as though he was trying to clear all the frustration in his mind by shouting them out.

The mysterious man who had guided him, as well as Fang Xingjian himself, both did not know that when the purple flames from before had changed Fang Xingjian's natural aptitudes, although they had stolen his sense of kinship, love, and friendship,

they had only stolen those and nothing else.

This was why he could still feel anger, hatred, loathe and dislike to a much greater degree than normal people. Every time he thought of what had happened in Demonic City, his heart would boil with anger.

Just as someone who, having been blind for a long time, would turn extremely sensitive to noise.

If one could not feel or use both legs, the arms would naturally become stronger than before.

When someone became like Fang Xingjian and lost the sense of love, only leaving behind hatred, his negative emotions would unceasingly be magnified. This was also why in a situation such as his, the methods of killing distracting thoughts used by ordinary people had entirely no effect in quelling the negative emotions and the distracting thoughts in his heart.

On the contrary, with the flow of time, his heart had become unable to sense the existence of love, while his negative emotions had multiplied more and more, easily filling his heart to the brim with hatred and anger.

Although Fang Xingjian still was not completely conscious of this fact, he had already formed a faint conjecture by this time.

Thus, when he bellowed, he felt as if his chest had lightened, and that his mind was comfortable for the moment. With a shift of his eyes, he felt as though he had gained some insight.

At this moment, Carter, who was ranked tenth in Class 256, and Zhou Yong who was ranked eighth, arrived outside Fang Xingjian's villa, laughing coldly as they stared at it.

They were aristocrats, and also from the same year as Fang Xingjian. Their talents and background were several times more inferior when compared to those of Kaunitz and the others, so they naturally took on the roles of underlings in the group.

This time around, they had come here under Kaunitz's orders, and wanted to provoke Fang Xingjian in order to disrupt the rhythm of his learning.

Zhou Yong opened his mouth, shouting loudly, "Fang Xingjian! You spend every day inside your villa! Are you hiding because you are afraid of meeting people?"

"Fang Xingjian, you obtained the first place which belonged to someone else through despicable means! Are you still considered a man?" Carter continued, "If I were you, I wouldn't have the face to still stay here. I would've already quit the academy and left long ago! How can you be so shameless? Could it be you're still hatching some nefarious schemes?! Since your aptitude can't match up to others, you want to go through the backdoor instead?"

As their strings of curses continued, the Knights in the surroundings all began to furrow their brows, their impression of Fang Xingjian worsening.

In the villa, the anger which Fang Xingjian had dispelled with great difficulty started to smolder yet again. His eyes were blood red. He wanted nothing more than to go out and violently beat up the two of them.

However, he knew that this meant that he would not be able to master the mental cultivation technique, but would instead be further away from mastering his Ice Age Meditation Art.

Thus, he tried to suppress and eradicate his flames of anger, forcing himself not to take action.

However, the two outside got increasingly cocky, their curses and scoldings got unbelievably insufferable.

"A despicable man like you, who goes through backdoors and uses underhanded methods, a trash who crawled up from the gutter, still has the face to stay in the Royal Academy?!"

"Haha, looking at how he is, I reckon that his parents are no

better. His dad is probably a conman and his mum a prostitute.”

In the villa, Fang Xingjian’s eyes snapped open, veins bulging on his forehead. It was as though his eyes were about to spit fire.

“You’re courting death!”

He could not bear it any longer. With a thunderous sound, Fang Xingjian dashed out the villa’s door. Zhou Yong and Carter could not even see Fang Xingjian’s silhouette clearly before feeling a black shadow caging their bodies.

Boom boom boom boom boom!

Fang Xingjian did not use a single sword art or technique. He merely punched his fists forward over ten times, continuously beating up Carter while aiming for his face. He was moving forward and simultaneously punching out. Carter’s body, propelled into the air from the impact, flopped down lifelessly. In the blink of an eye, Carter had been blasted about a hundred meters away.

Power-wise, Zhou Yong and Carter were ranked at the bottom amongst the ten in Class 256, while Fang Xingjian’s speed attribute was over 40 points. Even those who had recently transitioned into the more ordinary professions of the first transition were no match for him, let alone these two. They did not even have the time to attempt any reactions to his attacks.

Zhou Yong felt that with the amount of effort it took one to blink, Carter had already been flung back over a hundred meters by Fang Xingjian’s tens of punches. Carter’s face was heavily bruised with reddish, greenish, and purple patches as he flopped to the ground, only the whites of his eyes showing. He struggled to get up on his feet, but could not move an inch. He stared at Fang Xingjian, anger smouldering in his eyes, but was immediately knocked unconscious by Fang Xingjian, with only one slap.

Seeing what had just happened, Zhou Yong pointed at Fang

Xingjian and screamed shrilly, akin to a young girl who had just been raped, “You! You! You! What are you trying to do?! The academy prohibits private fights!”

“We’ll talk after I finish beating you up.”

Fang Xingjian laughed evilly as he sprinted forward as swift as a phantom, arriving in front of Zhou Yong. Only then did Zhou Yong attempt to retreat, but it was too late. He could already feel a claw-like hand gripping him, and lifting him up by his head.

He frenziedly used both his hands and legs to bash at Fang Xingjian’s body. However, the in difference strength between the two of them was too great, to the extent that he was not able to harm Fang Xingjian in the slightest.

Fang Xingjian snorted coldly, directly grabbing his opponent’s head and slamming it straight onto the ground. Under the violent actions, the air looked as if it had instantly contorted for a moment, and a dull sound echoed out, Zhou Yong’s head already pressed into the ground.

His four limbs twitched before he completely fainted into unconsciousness.

After finishing up what he wanted to do, Fang Xingjian felt his both his body and mind clear up. 70-80% of the distracting thoughts that burdened him earlier had completely dissipated.

He suddenly realized several things.

‘Taking away my sense of love, yet leaving hatred behind for me?

‘Methods of getting rid of distracting thoughts, suppressing emotions are not suitable for me.

‘I should repay grievances with grievances and vengeance with vengeance, and release all of my anger and hatred through violence.

‘Get rid of all the resentment in my heart and want only for

serenity of the mind.'

At this moment, Fang Xingjian could feel all the vital energy and blood in his body circulating violently, warmth radiating in all directions from him, in a battle-ready state.

His heart was extremely calm. Circulating the Ice Age Meditation Art, he felt an unprecedented serenity.

Warmth on the outside, coolness on the inside. Reason and calm simultaneously co-existing with anger and hatred.

He had mastered the Ice Age Meditation Art.

At this moment, Dick and a few other instructors made their way over, and upon seeing the unconscious Zhou Yong and Carter, Dick roared in rage, "Fang Xingjian! What are you doing?! Do you still give a hoot about the academy's rules? Do you still have your elders and instructors in your eyes?"

"They insulted my parents. I've already showed consideration for the academy's rules by not killing them," Fang Xingjian coldly stated. "If you all wish to punish me, go ahead. But if I encounter the same thing next time, I'll still do the same.

"Also, tell Kaunitz this. There's still two and a half months left. When the time to battle comes, I will break his ribs, one by one."

Hearing Fang Xingjian's words, Dick's anger soared to its limits as he raised a trembling finger, pointing straight at Fang Xingjian. "No respect for your elders. Extreme arrogance! Capture him, I want to report this to the Headmaster!"

Despite this, Fang Xingjian kept smiling coldly, not saying a word. If it were in the past, he would not have shown off his abilities in the limelight, and would have suppressed all his emotions within his heart.

But after he had said his mind, his thoughts had started circulating the Ice Age Meditation Art. He only felt frost and snow in his mind. This feeling was extremely satisfying, having no other

distracting thoughts.

Thus, he knew that he made the right move. In seven to eight days at most, he would be able completely master the Ice Age Meditation Art.

Chapter 53 Accomplishment

“Why?” Dick was standing in the Headmaster’s office. Anxiously, he continued, “Fang Xingjian does not respect his elders, he’s arrogant, and he has beaten up badly a student from the academy. We should expel such students immediately!”

“Sigh, youngsters tend to be hot-blooded. Even if they raise their hands against each other, it’s not such a big deal.” The Headmaster looked at the documents in his hands, and said without even lifting his head, “It’s sufficient to keep him in confinement for ten days. He is so talented. Do you really want to see him expelled?”

“Are you the Headmaster? Or am I?”

Having said these words, the Headmaster put on a grim face, his gaze towards Dick filling with discontent.

Under such a gaze, Dick suddenly broke out in a cold sweat as he lowered his head and said, “I was too anxious. I apologize, Headmaster.”

Seeing that Dick had stepped out, the Headmaster gave a cold snort and said, begrudgingly, “Old chap, this student of yours is too good at creating trouble. In all these years, no one else has dared to be so ruthless in the academy.”

“This is considered ruthless?” Huang Lin stepped out of the shadows and looked in the direction where Dick had walked out. Killing intent flashed in his eyes. “If someone dared to speak ill of my parents, I would definitely wring off their necks, to have them with my wine.”

“You are really...” The headmaster pointed at Huang Lin, smiling bitterly as he shook his head. “If it wasn’t for you, I would definitely have confined him for three months!”

Huang Lin said, disdainfully, “Talents, geniuses, should definitely enjoy special privileges. If they were to be treated on

equal terms with ordinary people, then there would not be an Empire today, let alone all these academies, Knights, Conferred Knights and Royal Knights.”

...

“Hahahaha!”

In his villa, Kaunitz was lying down on the sofa, laughing copiously. With a slight movement of his finger, the force enclosed the red wine within the force field and poured it into his mouth.

“Fang Xingjian is an idiot. I only wanted to mess up his rhythm a little, but to think that he is foolish enough to take action...

“Now that he is kept in confinement, the delay will make it even harder for him to become a Windstorm Sword Hero.”

Barbara, seated with her legs crossed, was looking at Kaunitz and that great wine held by the force field, her gaze filled with both wariness and envy. She smiled and said, “A commoner like him is all brawn and no brains, he only knows how to train relentlessly. And now, haven’t we made a fool out of him?”

Kaunitz sneered and said, “He actually said that he will teach me a lesson when we battle? Hmmm, hmmm. We’ll see who will be the one to teach the other a lesson.”

While they had been exchanging words, all the furniture and fittings within ten meters of Kaunitz under his force field crumbled to dust with a series of explosive crackling sounds.

“Someone! Come clean up this mess and replace everything here.”

...

In the northern side of the academy, there was a stone house built from big chunks of marble, with no windows on any of its four sides. It was pitch dark inside, only a small ray of sunlight the size of a palm shining in from a small window on the roof.

This was one of the academy's confinement rooms, especially used to confine students who had broken the academy's rules.

It was a pity that only Fang Xingjian was in there now.

However, although Fang Xingjian was kept here, he was still carrying out his daily training, as usual. Huang Lin had also instructed people to bring him all sorts of food and drinks. Other than having no one to do the laundry or to clean for him, and apart from having no soft bedding or exquisite furniture and fittings, it made almost no difference to him whether he trained here or whether he trained outside.

Of course, this was all due to Huang Lin's special attention.

After Fang Xingjian had relieved his fury the other day, he had found his own way of practicing the Ice Age Meditation. For the past few days, his training progress had gone exceptionally well, even his Waves being much smoother now. Even if he did not activate them deliberately, they were already 70-80% similar to the ones that the man had left behind.

'Excellent! There's no one to disturb me here. Without external stimulation, I'll be able to focus better on my training.

'The confinement lasts only ten days. During these ten days, I'll completely master the Waves and the mental cultivation method.'

Fang Xingjian lightly clenched his fist, a slight confident smile flashing across his face as he exhaled a long stream of current. He was practicing the Waves again.

Therefore, during the days he spent in the confinement room, Fang Xingjian acted as if he were outside, completely forgoing his sword arts practice, and focusing entirely on circulating the Waves and the mental cultivation method.

...

On the morning when the ten days of confinement were up, an instructor headed for the direction of the stone building.

Before he got close, he heard the crackling sounds of collisions.

‘This is...?’

His expression changed and he walked up. The collision sounds were now clearer.

This was the sound produced when currents collided against the stone walls. And now, this sound was highly controlled in a rhythm similar to that of a tide, which meant that the air currents knocking against the walls were as stable as tides.

‘Could this be his breathing?’

‘How could it be? Even a Knight who would have completed the first transition two to three years ago wouldn’t exert such oppression when circulating his Waves.’

The instructor’s expression was one of extreme astonishment. The motions in the stone building were as if a prehistoric dragon was sleeping inside. He quickly unlocked the lock with the keys, and pushed the door open.

He saw Fang Xingjian quietly sitting in the middle of the room with his legs crossed and both eyes closed. Each time he exhaled an air current would start flowing in all directions, with him at the center. It was as if strong gusts of wind swept by, eventually colliding against the walls.

“This is?!” The instructor’s eyes popped wide open at this sight. The breathing cadence seemed to have set the whole room in a specific rhythm.

It was the Mistral Windgod's Waves, Waves which could control air currents by communication with ether particles.

Just when he was staring, astonished, at Fang Xingjian’s Waves, the person in question suddenly opened his eyes and slowly stood up.

Along with this move, the previous strange happening

disappeared as well. A tinge of cool light flashed across Fang Xingjian's eyes. With a slight twist of his body, a series of crackling sounds came from his joints.

He had not moved for over twenty-four hours, devoting all of his efforts only to circulating the Mistral Windgod's Waves and Ice Age Meditation Art.

This also meant that with the over ten days of studying before being confined, plus the final ten days of tough practice in the stone room, over twenty hours out of twenty-four, he had finally mastered the Mistral Windgod's Waves and Ice Age Meditation Art.

Therefore, there were two more additions to his Techniques Column now.

Mistral Windgod's Waves level 1: when the Waves are activated, all attributes increase by 1 point.

Ice Age Meditation Art level 1: when the Ice Age Meditation Art is activated, it increases one's observation skills, reaction and judgement, bringing one extremely close to absolute rationale and calm.

As long as the Waves were circulated, one's attributes would increase. One could not look down on this little increment. It would increase by 1 point when one's strength attribute was 10, and then increase by 1 more point when one's strength attribute was 100. When it was over 100 points, a one point increase would make a vast difference, and one would need to deplete at least 100,000 potential points or more, just to increase the attribute by 1 point.

From this, one could tell how nature-defying Waves were, since they could change the practitioner's life essence, bringing it closer to the structure of ether particles. They were just like ripples in the water, having the effect of amplification. The stronger the force, the greater the increment, thus allowing for the same increase in

points to one's attributes.

Ice Age Meditation Art was even better, especially in battles. However, as Fang Xingjian's way of training this mental cultivation method was different from others, his temper would appear to be very bad in others' eyes. He had to release all his negative emotions, trying his best not to leave even a tinge of it in his heart.

Chapter 54 The Last Month

After obtaining these two skills Fang Xingjian wanted to level them up. Thus, everyday, he would take some time to circulate and cultivate his Waves and his mental cultivation method. Each additional second he spent on them enabled him to gain additional experience points for both the Waves and the mental cultivation method. Once he had enough experience points, the techniques would naturally level up.

However, Fang Xingjian knew that he still harbored great hatred in his heart, hatred which he had yet satisfy in revenge. Therefore, not all of his negative emotions could be completely cleansed. If he truly wanted to reach the pinnacle of his mental cultivation method, he would definitely have to wait until when the grudges in his heart would be avenged, until when his heart would be cleansed and emptied of these distracting thoughts.

Coldly glancing at the instructor, Fang Xingjian indifferently asked, "Can I leave now?"

The instructor was stunned for a moment. Although he felt that Fang Xingjian's tone was extremely disrespectful, he could not do something just because of that. He only replied, "Mmm, sure. You can leave."

Fang Xingjian nodded as he strode out the door, heading towards his villa.

Right now, since he had already cultivated to the first level for both his Waves and his mental cultivation method, the next thing he ought to do was to continue training in Nurturing sword techniques and Training sword techniques, thus increasing his attributes and simultaneously researching the secret to creating that perfect set of muscles.

However, the very moment he had returned to his villa, Fang Xingjian found Jack and Anthony lying on his couch with swollen

bruised faces.

Seeing that Fang Xingjian had returned, both of them were left dumbstruck. Jack shouted, “Xingjian, you’ve finally been released! Did you run into Kaunitz and the rest on the way back?”

Fang Xingjian looked into their eyes as he frowned and asked, “Did they beat you up again? Who was it?”

“All of them have ruthlessly done this to us during the live combat practice, but you must definitely not go and look for them. Barbara from the Fei Yang Academy and Ferdinand from the Aristocrat Academy both have already transitioned successfully. You must not go looking for them in a moment of impulse!”

Fang Xingjian was slightly stunned. He would never have thought that these two people would actually transition successfully so soon after Kaunitz. But then again, one whole month had already passed, and as members of aristocratic clans, it was not surprising for them to achieve such results.

Fang Xingjian coldly stated, “Don’t worry. Once I’ve transitioned, I’ll teach them a good lesson on your behalf.” Now, he was no longer trying to hide his raging temper. This was for the cultivation of his mental cultivation method. He would unleash all the negative emotions in his heart, and then follow up by using the mental cultivation method to suppress his negative thoughts and emotions.

After all, he would never be able to fully kill off all of his distracting thoughts and emotions through gradual elimination.

Even so, Fang Xingjian releasing his emotions did not mean that he was an impulsive fool. It was his way of making his stand clear, declaring that he would be dealing with Kaunitz at a later time, if only in order to relieve his emotions, but he was not foolish enough to attempt to deal with three Knights who had completed their transitions, all by himself.

However, seeing Anthony and Jack hiding here, he frowned and asked, “Why are you guys hiding here?”

Jack and Anthony locked gazes before they helplessly sighed, “They blocked the pathway to our doorstep. Each time we go back they make a din and scold us. We have no way to rest or train at all.”

“Don’t the instructors care?” Fang Xingjian raged.

“Care about what?” Jack cursed. “Dick and the others are all nobility. They basically all have the same standing. When we went to complain, he told us to beware of influence, and told us not to mess around and not be like you, sending the entire academy in turmoil.”

Hmph.

Fang Xingjian coldly snorted. He had no feelings of friendship with Jack and Anthony, but he incomparably loathed the methods that Dick, Kaunitz and those from the aristocratic clans used.

He decided to let Jack and Anthony stay there. Either way, the villa was extremely huge, and housing two more would be no problem.

As for Kaunitz, no one knew whether he was afraid to offend Huang Lin, or whether due to the fact that, previously, Carter and Zhou Yong had been injured too badly, no one came to make a commotion at Fang Xingjian’s.

After thinking about it, Fang Xingjian came up with some conjectures. After all, Kaunitz and the others had to focus on their cultivation as well, and it was not possible for them to personally come and create a disturbance. As for Carter and Zhou Yong, how would they dare to come over to Fang Xingjian’s residence again? After all, Fang Xingjian was unlike Jack and Anthony, who had suffered heavy injuries after being beaten up by Kaunitz and the others in class and yet did not dare to strike back even when being

bullied.

Fang Xingjian's abilities had surpassed theirs. Not only was he uninjured, he even dared to strike back!

And so, for the next few days, Jack and Anthony simply stayed in Fang Xingjian's villa, asking their servants to deliver their meals over to this temporary residence.

Fang Xingjian did not concern himself with such things. The moment he returned to the valley he would immerse himself in cultivating his sword techniques, spending about twenty hours per day on sword practice. With only three hours of sleep every night, his crazed-demon look gave Jack and Anthony a huge scare.

They had come across crazy maniacs who devoted all their time and effort into cultivating their martial arts before. And, in truth, those who could pass the Prefectural Selection and eventually enter the Royal Academy, were all those who had put great effort into their training. Even a genius like Kaunitz would spend over fifteen hours on his daily training routine.

But this was the first time either Jack or Anthony had seen someone like Fang Xingjian, someone who was practicing as if he had gone crazy. Due to this, they now had even more admiration for Fang Xingjian.

...

The days passed by and in the blink of an eye there was only a month left before the deadline for going through the job transition.

Making the most of this one month plus span of time, Fang Xingjian perfected the various sword techniques which Huang Lin had shared with him, to their maximum levels. Some of them were at the level 30. Many others at level 20.

Other than that, he had also mastered the sword techniques which the Tempest Overlord and the two other Knights had

trained in, up to level 10. It was a pity that out of all the new sword techniques which he had learnt, there was only one set which had brought him an additional attributes increase.

As the number of sword techniques he practiced increased, the sword techniques which granted him additional attribute increments also got increasingly less. However, during this time, his reaction attribute had greatly increased through his practice of the Meteor Sword Technique.

The higher grade Nurturing sword techniques had also allowed the amount of potential he gained daily to rise up to 7,000 points.

Therefore, his attributes had now become:

Name	
Fang Xingjian	
Age	
16	
Occupation	
Warrior's Squire	
Level	
9	
Strength	
43	
Agility	
48	
Reaction	
44	
Endurance	
36	

Flexibility

35

Nurturing Sword Techniques

31 sets

Training Sword Techniques

3 sets

Specialities:

Genius Swordsmanship,

Elementary Survival Instinct,

Internal Healing,

Internal Training,

Sword Specialist

Potential

7,000 point increase/day

Waves

Level 1 Mistral Windgod's Waves

Mental Cultivation Method

Level 1 Ice Age Meditation Art

Although Fang Xingjian had already comprehended the Waves and the mental cultivation method, his talent in these two areas was only mediocre.

However, although the rate of progress in his Waves and mental cultivation method was not fast, the gap between his stats and the attribute requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero had been shortened to the point where he now only lacked 2 points in strength, 12 points in agility, and 1 point in reaction. As for the endurance and flexibility attributes, he had already met the necessary requirements..

However, with only one month left, even if he were to include the additional 1 point he would gain for each of his attributes through circulating Waves, it would still be a close call for Fang Xingjian.

After all, the requirement of having 60 points in the agility attribute was too challenging. As of now, he was still short of 12 points.

In what concerned the Perfect Muscles speciality, even now he was still absolutely clueless about it.

‘Perfect Muscles? How on earth did they manage to achieve it?’

...

In the training room, three silhouettes unceasingly clashed in the air. The air was howling, as if a demoness was shrieking. The blurred silhouettes zoomed about, clashing with each other, each time creating trails of Qi current. Every step they took was accompanied by a series of booming thunderous sounds, as though the whole residence was bound to collapse the very next instant.

In reality, if not for the fact that Knights’ residences were all reinforced with steel, the building would have collapsed long ago.

As a thunderous sound rang out, two silhouettes instantly flew. These two silhouettes were none others than Jack and Anthony. Their faces were red, but with the help of the Reduced Force Field, they gently drifted downwards, stabilizing themselves.

That’s right. Another month had passed, and after almost two months’ time, they had successfully completed their first transition. Everyone in Class 256 had completed their first transition, with the exception of Fang Xingjian.

But at this moment, Anthony and Jack were staring at Fang Xingjian as though they were looking at a ghost.

Fang Xingjian was standing on the huge craters left on the ground, formed through collisions of great intensity, as well as by

the their stomps. With a slight movement, he sent countless stone fragments flying.

Jack exclaimed in shock, “Crap! Are you still human? We have already completed our first transition but we are actually still unable to defeat you?”

“Not only are we unable to defeat you,” said Anthony, looking at Fang Xingjian with a gaze filled with terror. “I feel that when we are fighting against you, it’s even more exhausting than fighting against Kaunitz and the others.”

“Yup, if there’s anyone who still dares to say that you are the only trash in our class who hasn’t completed his transition yet, I will be the first to object.” Jack shook his head as he said, “When compared to us, you who have not undergone your first transition actually has greater strength, higher agility, faster reaction, plus sword techniques so strong that they are inhumane, all without using ether particles. How strong would you become after your first transition?”

“If I don’t undergo the first transition, I’m nothing,” Fang Xingjian replied indifferently. “You guys can leave. I wish to train alone for a while.”

Chapter 55 Profoundness and Comprehension

After Anthony and Jack left, Fang Xingjian was left alone in the training room, waving his longsword to portray different sword stances.

As he thrust the sword again and again, various sword techniques were displayed, almost as if a massive amount of flowers had bloomed majestically.

In his hands, it was as if the sword techniques had their own souls, and with the increase in the number of sword techniques he had been practicing, the level of cultivation of his sword arts was also brought to new heights. Regardless if it was the speed at which he was learning sword arts; or their application in battles; or the flow in switching from sword stance to sword stance, they had all improved qualitatively.

However, towards the matter of Perfect Muscles, he still felt that something was not right, as if something was missing – something which caused him to not be able to achieve Perfect Muscles.

The various rumors that were going around with regards to Fang Xingjian seemed to be progressively getting worse. The Knights who passed by Fang Xingjian's villa all looked towards it with gazes filled with contempt.

As the students in Class 256 all completed their job transitions one after another, with Fang Xingjian still not being able to complete his job transition at such a late point in time, more and more people grew to believe that Fang Xingjian had entered the academy through backdoor, and that he did not have the talent to be a Prefectural Champion.

Another fifteen days passed by. Fang Xingjian perfected the basic sword techniques of the Tempest Overload and the others to the

maximum level, bringing himself additional increments for his attributes.

During this period, he had picked up an additional sword technique, the Storm Sword Technique, which was specially targeted towards raising one’s agility attribute. This was done in order to increase his own agility attribute, as well as to get a moderate increase in other attributes.

Having brought fifteen sword techniques to their maximum level, there were a few Nurturing techniques which did not overlap and brought him additional potential points. Of course, this also caused him to have to increase his training time to three hours in order to accumulate potential points , and the potential he could gain increased to 8500 points.

Therefore, Fang Xingjian’s attributes changed to become:

Name	
Fang Xingjian	
Age	
16	
Occupation	
Warrior’s Squire	
Level	
9	
Strength	
45	
Agility	
56	
Reaction	
46	

Endurance

38

Flexibility

35

Nurturing Sword Techniques

31 sets

Training Sword Techniques

3 sets

Specialities:

Genius Swordsmanship,

Elementary Survival Instinct,

Internal Healing,

Internal Training,

Sword Specialist

Potential

8,500 point increase/day

Waves

Level 1 Mistral Windgod's Waves

Mental Cultivation Method

Level 1 Ice Age Meditation Art

At present, Fang Xingjian was only 4 points away before his agility attribute met the requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero. However, most of his sword techniques had already reached their maximum level, and there were lesser varieties of Nurturing techniques which he had yet to learn.

Therefore, from now onwards, he would probably have to depend on potential to increase his attributes. What was left was

the job progress and Waves after the job transition was completed.

However, even after he had perfected the three Divine Level characters' fifteen sword techniques to their maximum levels, he was still unable to grasp the Perfect Muscles specialty.

From this, it was obvious how tough it was to become a Windstorm Sword Hero. What Fang Xingjian had already achieved would probably, by comparison, be something that one with mediocre talent be unable to accomplish even with decades of training. Even a genius like Kaunitz would probably need to take at least twenty years to achieve Fang Xingjian's current level.

While one was spending decades to complete the first transition, other people from the same class would probably have long completed their second transition, or would have even reached the pinnacle of their second transition and were just waiting to see if they could achieve a breakthrough and attain the Divine Level.

It was also why, after all these years, no had had attempted to try out those rare jobs... While they were powerful, it was impossible for ordinary people to put so much resources and time to waste.

Only a monstrous level talent like Fang Xingjian would be able to achieve so much within two and a half months.

However, even Fang Xingjian had not been able to fully grasp the principle behind the Perfect Muscles. He started to have doubts as to whether or not he had been too confident at the start, and made the wrong choice.

‘Impossible.

‘My talent is many times better than the three predecessors. If they can do it, there's no reason that I can't.’

Once again, Fang Xingjian displayed the fifteen sets of basic sword techniques, while their use, profoundness, principles, and other factors all flashed through his mind as he tried to think of their similarities, and think of the definition of Perfect Muscles on

Earth.

‘Perfect Muscles, each person would have a little of it and most people would only be able to get it through extreme training in small amounts each time, but with high repetitions. It must be maintained and yet can only be increased by a little. Theoretically speaking, it is impossible for it to cover all parts of the body.

‘Tempest Overlord and the others... How on earth did they managed to achieve it before completing their first transition?’

Just as Fang Xingjian was thinking about it, Jack and Anthony knocked opened the door, dashing in one after another.

“Xingjian, bad news. Kaunitz has defeated Robert!”

They yelled out, but saw that Fang Xingjian was as if he had been possessed, mumbling while he continued with his sword practice.

“Fang Xingjian, did you even hear what we said?!” Jack shouted.

“Kaunitz’s Waves broke through to level 3. He has unparalleled talent in Waves cultivation, and coupled with the job advantage of the Six Armed Asura, he managed to defeat Robert.

“Now, everyone is saying that he should be this batch’s Prefectural Champion, and that he is the person with the strongest talent amongst us.”

Anthony said with a grim look on his face, “He has already said that so long as you are willing to kowtow to him, apologize, and admit that he should be the real Prefectural Champion, he is willing to let you go from the battle that will be taking place half a month later.”

Seeing that Fang Xingjian was still carrying on with his sword practice as if he was possessed, Jack could not hold it in any longer and shouted out, “Did you hear what we’ve said?! Kaunitz’s Waves has reached level 3!”

“Waves?” Fang Xingjian was stunned for a moment and he

suddenly stopped.

“To get a high level of cultivation for the Waves, it is best for it to be continuously circulating at all times.”

“The three of them are all equipped with great talent in the area of Waves cultivation.”

“Perfect Muscles requires extreme training in small amounts each time but with high repetition.”

“All over the body?”

“At all times?”

“All three of them were absolute talents in Waves cultivation?”

Fang Xingjian’s face twitched, and suddenly he broke out into a loud laughter.

Jack and Anthony exchanged glances, “It can’t be?”

“Could it be that this guy was dealt a blow and has gone crazy?”

Fang Xingjian said, “I understand, I finally understand. Kaunitz’s talent in Waves cultivation is real, but for the other three, theirs were faked. They used the sword movements to substitute Waves movements. This meant that their muscles were constantly trained for twenty-four hours daily, thus allowing them to achieve the Perfect Muscles.”

“Therefore, they all had five sets of sword techniques which covered the training for every part of their body. It was because they needed to replace all their daily motions with sword motions.”

Jack blinked and asked, “Xingjian, what are you talking about?”

They did not have the chance to probe any further before they were chased out by Fang Xingjian. After that, Fang Xingjian continued his sword practice, one stance at a time. But unlike how he did so previously, he tried to compare each breath in the Mistral Windgod's Waves, each flow of his blood, with a similar sword

movement which produced the same motion.

Humans could control the rhythm of their breath, and could affect the blood's flow through compressing one's organs and muscles. Therefore, they would naturally be able to achieve a similar effects through various movements, just like sword practice.

It was like when a punch was dealt, blood would naturally gush towards the fist.

With a point of a finger, the fingertips would have a swollen feeling. It was blood coagulating at the fingertips.

Fang Xingjian wanted to cultivate his Waves through sword practice, and then allow himself to continuously circulate Waves for twenty-four hours at all times.

Such a sword practice was equivalent to Waves cultivation, and cultivating the Waves would be equivalent to going through sword practice. So long as Waves were circulated, he would be able to train each and every piece of his muscles at all times.

He wanted to combine Waves and sword arts into one.

Fang Xingjian's current advantage was much more than the Tempest Overlord and the others. It was because he had picked up thirty-four sets of sword techniques and had a monstrous talent. He could easily find out the sword movement which could produce the same rhythm as the Wave's.

Just in terms of Nurturing techniques and Training techniques, he could very well be considered a master of his generation.

Therefore, as each day passed by, just seven days before the promise of three months was up, Fang Xingjian finally managed to complete all of his substitutions.

Chapter 56 Postpone

“It’s finally completed.”

Fang Xingjian closed his eyes, reviewing the situation within his body. Now, regardless of whether he was sitting, lying down, or walking, he would be constantly practicing various sword moves. No matter if he was running, jumping, walking, or sleeping, the muscles and bones in his body would be activated through various sword stances to hone his body.

What was more amazing was that while the tens of sword techniques for different styles and varieties looked like a horrible mess when connected, they put pressure on his body, stirring his breath, and slapping against his blood vessels, allowing him to activate a circulation with the same style as the Mistral Windgod's Waves.

Fang Xingjian felt that every single bone, every single piece of muscle in his body was constantly being trained.

Not only that, because he moved and activated various parts of his body through sword movements, this also meant that Fang Xingjian was constantly practicing sword techniques.

It was as if he was accumulating experience in the sword techniques at all times, increasing and depleting potential.

Merging the Waves with sword techniques, and constantly circulating Waves for twenty-four hours every day allowed his daily activities to maintain the state required for the Waves.

This was his result from the past few days, integrating the Waves into sword techniques, and then integrating sword techniques into his daily activities. Now, so long as he was alive, he was constantly practicing sword arts and cultivating Waves.

However, most of his sword techniques had already reached the maximum level. After his potential had reached the upper limit, it

would not continue to increase. After fully depleting his potential, it would not be good for him to continue applying Training techniques.

However, this was sufficient. To be able to practice sword techniques at all times spared Fang Xingjian from having to spend a large amount of time on his sword practice to accumulate potential in order to increase his attributes.

The best thing was that it also allowed him to circulate Waves at all times, replacing Waves cultivation through the path of sword arts. Fang Xingjian looked at the Techniques Column of his stats screen. The experience for Mistral Windgod's Waves was increasing frantically with the passing of every second.

‘With this speed, the progress rate of the Waves would be faster since I’m now cultivating it through sword arts practice.

‘I feel that all the muscles all over my body are going through a complete makeover.’

At present, Fang Xingjian was like a piece of material placed on a forging platform, with the thousand and tens of thousand of sword techniques being like many hammers, continuously knocking on his body, causing the muscles all over his bodies to change gradually.

And as for the past two months, all sorts of nourishment and vital essence hidden in his body from the medicinal food, the ferocious beasts, and the tonic that he had eaten were all knocked out, merging into his body together with the Mistral Windgod's Waves.

However, even though he was on the path to achieving the Perfect Muscles, a physical body was still the physical body. Even if you had comprehended it, you would still need to gradually make changes to the physical body to achieve any sort of success.

It was impossible for one to immediately undergo huge progress

and have the physical body go through an evolution just from comprehending it. Those were celestial arts, not sword arts.

Now that one has comprehended it, it would just be a mental change. The physical body would still need to go through a gradual change one day at a time.

“I’ll need to make the best use of my time.” Fang Xingjian’s expression was solemn. At present, he was only short of three specialties to be able to go through with the job transition. For the Perfect Muscles, he could only wait for his body to change gradually. What he needed to do now was to rely on his extremely high attributes to get the other two specialties.

For the next seven days, he underwent tough cultivation for his Waves, sword arts, and specialties. But during his daily activities, regardless if he was walking, sitting or lying down, he increasingly felt that something was off.

...

Seven days later, on the KIRST Royal Academy’s battle arena.

Kaunitz was drawn and pointed to the ground as he stood there, his eyes closed. His head of golden hair danced in the wind and was shining a brilliant glow as if it was the sun’s.

Waiting from noon till now, over half an hour had passed. But on the promised date of the battle, Fang Xingjian did not appear even after so much time had passed.

At the bottom of the arena, over a hundred people were waiting to observe the battle.

While there were only over a hundred people, it was not a number to be underestimated. The whole academy had only nine classes, and excluding the few who had gotten through the Regional Selection and entered the Regional Royal Academy, there were only over eighty students in total. If it was not for the tens of instructors who had come by, it was impossible for there to even be

a hundred people gathered.

Seeing that Fang Xingjian had not arrived after so long, the people in the crowd started whispering amongst themselves.

“Why is Fang Xingjian not here yet?”

“He must be scared.”

“That’s true. I heard that a few days ago, Kaunitz had sparred with a Knight who was from Class 255, from one batch earlier, and he did not end up to be on the losing end.”

Below the other side of the arena, Ferdinand smiled and asked Barbara who was standing beside him, “Do you think Fang Xingjian will come?”

“How could that be possible?” Barbara laughed out and said, “Half a month ago, I sent people to keep an eye on the entrances to the all of secret realms as well as the outside of Fang Xingjian’s villa. These past few days, no one has entered the secret realm and Fang Xingjian did not take a single step out of his villa either.

Therefore, it’s impossible for him to have gone through the job transition. Without completing the job transition, how could he challenge Kaunitz?”

On the other side, Jack and Anthony were both looking anxiously at the arena.

Jack said, “What to do? Xingjian has yet to complete his job transition. If he came, I wonder how much of a chance would he have to win Kaunitz.”

“If I were him, I wouldn’t come.” Anthony shook his head. “The battle with Kaunitz is merely one started on impulse to begin with. If I had the time, I wouldn’t be wasting it on something like this. Even if I were to win, there’d be no prizes and it would even offend the Tresia Clan. Moreover, while Fang Xingjian is already powerful enough without going through the job transition, after completing the first transition, he’ll still get extraordinary powers.”

While Fang Xingjian appeared to be a bit cool in his attitude, but just the fact that he had let them stay at his place and shared his ferocious beasts' essence and medicinal food, they owed him a great debt of gratitude.

After all, their rankings were towards the end, and thus they did not have sufficient medicines and ferocious beasts assigned to them.

After Fang Xingjian had generously shared his part of the items assigned by the academy with them, and provided them with sufficient nutrients and tonic to replenish their bodies' daily expenditure, and allowed them to maximize their training to the full potential, they had already treated Fang Xingjian as their best friend.

Just as the people at the bottom of the arena were getting increasingly impatient, a shadow flashed on the arena. However, it was the Sword and Sabers Department's strongest instructor, Huang Lin.

Kaunitz smiled and nodded his head, asking, "Teacher, is Fang Xingjian forfeiting the match?"

Huang Lin remained silent for a moment before he said, "Fang Xingjian has now entered the final juncture before the first transition and will not be able to participate in the battle today. The battle shall be postponed for ten days."

After Huang Lin finished his words, discussions broke out below the arena.

"What? Postponed for ten days?"

"Postponed as he wish? This isn't a child's play. "

"Hmph, he should just admit his defeat. Do we all have to wait for him if he were to request to push back for another ten days, ten days later?"

Hearing the discussions below the arena, Huang Lin's expression

turned grim. Kaunitz shrugged his shoulders, smiled and said, “Teacher, you’ve heard it for yourself. Fang Xingjian shouldn’t come as he wishes, or postpone match as he wishes. What does he treat a Knight’s honor, honesty and courage as?”

The crowd below the arena also immediately turned noisy.

Barbara shouted, “That’s right! Entering by the backdoor isn’t enough for him, and now he’s even thinking of backing out shamelessly in a battle?”

Ferdinand also followed to shout out, “It’s really an insult to us to be called a Knight together with a person like him.”

At their lead, the crowd’s reprimand also turned worse. From their mouths, Fang Xingjian became the most disgusting, sinister and despicable man.

Huang Lin’s face turned black like the color of a pot’s base. If it was not for the fact that he was on the losing end of reason, he would have long ago slashed out at those few people with his sword.

With a cold grunt from him, violent killing aura poured out. Everyone present were suppressed so much so that they were not able to say anything. It was as if a chattering little bird was suddenly grabbed by the neck.

The next moment, Huang Lin’s ice cold voice rang out.

“The battle shall be postponed for ten days. Ten days later, at noon, Fang Xingjian will be waiting for Kaunitz here. If he does not make good of the promise or is defeated by Kaunitz, he promises to withdraw from the Knight Academy.”

With these words, the place was filled with silence. Everyone’s faces were filled with astonishment.

Jack and Anthony exchanged a glance, their faces filled with worry.

The corner of Kaunitz's lips curled up slightly, revealing a satisfied expression.

“I have no problem with that.”

Chapter 57 Choice

Three days later, in the training chamber, Fang Xingjian's silhouette turned into an incessantly flickering blurry grey shadow, as he moved about.

In the spot where he was standing, threads of black light were flying across the space, directly piercing into the ground.

It was the Ox Hair Needle Huang Lin borrowed from the military, a kind of standardized weapon with extreme speed and power.

As the last one thousand Ox Hair Needles were fired, Fang Xingjian halted his movements, removing the earplugs from his ears and feeling his eyes.

On the other side, Jack and Anthony put down the needle box they were holding, stuck out their tongues and said,

“This item is quite overwhelming. If one fires a volley of needles at close distance, even a Knight would fall prey to it if not cautious.”

Anthony spoke, “This was originally something that the army developed to allow ordinary soldiers to restrain Knight opponents. However, if the Knights are expecting them, these needles would barely even pass through the Reduced Force Field. But if they fire the needles intermittently, in large quantities, it's sufficient to exhaust a large amount of the Knight's energy.”

Jack gazed in Fang Xingjian's direction as he asked with deep concern, “How is it, Xingjian, did you succeed?”

“Mmm.”

Fang Xingjian took his hands down from his eyes. He had gained one more speciality - High Agility Motion Vision, which increased his the rate at which optical signals were sent, strengthening the practitioner's motion vision.

Relying on his attributes, which were sufficiently high, he had been training frenziedly for the past few days. Very soon, he completed the 0.1 second reflex for ten thousand times, and dodged ten thousand high speed attacks before he gained the specialities High Agility Motion Vision and Heightened Reflex.

In truth, these two specialities were also the two specialities that Knights usually had a hard time gaining before their first transition.

For Knights who had completed the first transition and who were powerful enough, or for the majority of the Knights who had completed their second transitions, both Heightened Reflexes and High Agility Motion Vision were the compulsory specialities they had to master.

Knights who had yet to complete their first transition generally did not have sufficient attributes, and so it was more difficult for them to gain such specialities.

However, this was obviously not a problem for Fang Xingjian. He took a look at his specialities, feeling a fiery energy surging from the muscles throughout his body, and unceasingly breaking through limits.

“Perfect Muscles... I’m going to obtain it soon.”

Standing at the side, Jack asked, “Xingjian, is it in time? How confident are you in defeating Kaunitz?”

“It’s a small issue, no need to be concerned.” Fang Xingjian’s eyes were vacant, as though his spirit was on a journey in another dimension. “You guys can leave, I want to go proceed with my sword practice.”

Jack and Anthony locked their gazes, as they slowly turned to take their leave.

Jack exhaled and said, “What did you sense? The pressure Xingjian is giving off is getting increasingly stronger.”

“Mmm.” Anthony nodded in agreement. “The feeling he gave me was stronger than the one I sense when I’m facing some of the instructors.”

Within the training room, Fang Xingjian suddenly started walking in circles unrelentlessly, his speed faster and faster. In the blink of an eye he turned into countless afterimages.

Simply walking about like this, Fang Xingjian’s muscles, vessels and bones all over his body started moving according to the principle of sword arts, equivalent to him constantly practicing his sword techniques at all times.

Tens of sword techniques circulated restlessly in his mind. Fang Xingjian had taken nine months in order to master what others had taken decades to achieve. In terms of sword arts, he could already be considered a master of his generation.

But now, he had run into the same problem as any other master.

“Using sword techniques to unceasingly move the body, enhancing the Waves...

“The Waves are circulating perfectly...

“But during the change between sword stances, I only feel imperfection.”

Fang Xingjian’s gaze stiffened. The powers circulating within his entire body had undergone a slight transformation.

His breathing seemed to have lightened slightly, and the blood flow on his right shoulder and elbow had also slowed down a teeny weeny bit.

Among such minute changes, Fang Xingjian saw the Mistral Windgod’s Wave on his Stats Window start to turn slightly blurry, as though it would become something else in the next moment.

“According to my intuition, the strength in each moment of the circulation should feel more natural and fluid.

“But the Waves also underwent a transformation because of the changes in strength, resulting in changes to my breathing and blood flow...”

Unexpectedly, Fang Xingjian noticed that when he wanted to make changes, the Waves would not stop circulating, but rather they would change the Mistral Windgod's Waves into another type of Waves.

‘Should I do it?

‘Follow my intuition and cultivate a new type of Wave? This might even affect my first transition.

‘Or should I just stick with the Mistral Windgod's Waves and transition into a Windstorm Sword Hero?’

Fang Xingjian instantly came face to face with a dilemma.

Because each person would only be able to cultivate a single type of Wave, if one were to change to cultivate another type of Wave, for most cases, one had to follow their chosen path to the very end.

This was because a person's vital frequency was incapable of abruptly undergoing a transformation. If someone had already fully adjusted to the new wave, reverting to the original Wave would take a very long time.

Time flowed by, and in the blink of an eye, it was one day before the duel.

The rumours about Fang Xingjian which were spreading throughout the academy had gotten increasingly unfavourable, the main reason being the fact that even up until this moment Fang Xingjian had yet to enter the secret realm and go through his job transition.

To majority of people, Fang Xingjian was someone with absolutely no hope of going through the job transition.

Fang Xingjian stood within the training room as he looked at his

Stats Window, which now had yet another speciality. Perfect Muscles: muscles gain the incomparable endurance of a marathon champion's muscles, along with the strong explosive bursts of energy of a short distance sprinting champion's muscles; strength and agility attributes also increase by 10% of the endurance attribute's value.

During this time, Fang Xingjian had integrated his sword techniques into every action of his daily life. This method of training his sword techniques for twenty-four hours a day had also allowed him to perfect all the sword techniques which had not reached the maximum level yet.

In addition, with the help of the Nurturing sword techniques circulating in his body everyday, tempering the attributes of his physical body, Fang Xingjian's current stats had become:

Name
Fang Xingjian
Age
16
Occupation
Warrior's Squire
Level
9
Strength
48+4
Agility
61+4
Reaction
47

Endurance

41

Flexibility

41

Nurturing Sword Techniques

31 sets

Training Sword Techniques

4 sets

Specialities

Genius Swordsmanship,

Elementary Survival Instinct,

Internal Healing,

Internal Training,

Sword Specialist,

High Agility Motion Vision,

Heightened Reflexes,

Perfect Muscles

Potential

8,500 point increase/day

Waves

Level 1 Mistral Windgod's Waves

Mental Cultivation Method

Level 1 Ice Age Meditation Art

The attributes above come into effect once the Mistral Windgod's Waves is activated.

Due to Perfect Muscles, +4 in strength and agility (10% of the

endurance attribute)

In his current state, regardless of his attributes or specialities, he had exceeded the requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero. If he were to enter a secret realm and to undergo the job transition, there was a 99% probability of him successfully becoming a Windstorm Sword Hero.

However, he continued to stare at the words 'Mistral Windgod's Waves' on his Stats Windows which fluctuated between blurry and clear, in deep thought.

He was still hesitant.

Fang Xingjian's mind involuntarily brought up the Tempest Overlord and the other two's experiences.

'The three of them were facing their peers, their sword arts practice companions, watching as the others advanced, learned new techniques and trained new specialities, simply following the pre-assigned routes for their transition. In comparison, they spent over twenty years to learn basic sword techniques, incorporating Waves into their sword arts, and then the sword arts into their body. During this process, how much hesitation and helplessness did they feel? How much scorn and sarcasm did they have to put up with?'

It was an extremely difficult task for one to persevere in one particular area for over twenty years.

And what that was even more upsetting was that they did not know if the abilities they were training in were right or wrong, nor did they know if they were to succeed or fail.

'What was the reason that made all of you persist so stubbornly?'

The information on the many generations of the Empire's geniuses flashed through Fang Xingjian's mind once again.

Fang Xingjian did not know what the reason for their persistence was as they created new Waves, new mental cultivation methods,

and thus, new jobs.

However, he knew that the reason why he was so hesitant was because the level of his sword arts was high, and he had absolute confidence in his control of the sword arts.

‘I believe that as long as I change the Waves according to my intuition, my body will definitely gain strength.

‘I believe that after I make the changes to my sword arts, since the Waves rely on the sword arts to be displayed, they will become more synchronized with my sword arts and my body.

‘Because my talent in sword arts is unrivalled.’

Waves of self-confidence glowed in Fang Xingjian’s eyes as he started circulating once again, practicing his sword techniques and circulating his Waves.

At midnight that day, Fang Xingjian and Huang Lin appeared before the secret realm at the west of the academy.

It was a white stone palace about thirty meters in height, with thick stone pillars, and fragmented marble. All of it stood as proof of how ancient the palace was.

Huang Lin said, “At midnight today, out of the academy’s seven secret realms, the ether particles in the Saint Hall will be the most active.

“Are you ready?”

Fang Xingjian sighed, his eyes looking as if they were filled with sword light as he said, “I’ve been waiting too long for this moment.”

Seeing Fang Xingjian slowly step into the pure white palace, traces of nervousness riddled Huang Lin’s expression.

A few moments after Fang Xingjian entered the palace, an old white-haired elderly appeared beside Huang Lin.

Chapter 58 Success? Failure?

The old man who had appeared besides Huang Lin was the Knight Academy's Headmaster.

The Headmaster looked at the secret realm which shone with a pure and holy light and asked calmly, "Can he succeed? You should know that in order to allow you two such a delay I've withstood much pressure, and expended a lot of money and resources. If he were to fail..."

Huang Lin's expression was solemn and his tone serious as he said, "He has completed all the requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero. It is impossible for him to fail."

At the same time, in another corner of the sanctuary, human silhouettes continuously appeared in this dark night.

The Headmaster smiled bitterly, "Windstorm Sword Hero... It has attracted too many people's attention.

"If there's anyone who dares to break the rules, I'll kill them." Huang Lin's words were like a thrust sword, and it sounded as if a metallic sound had rung through the air.

In the dimness were Kaunitz, Barbara, Ferdinand, Jack and Anthony, even Robert and the Knights from other classes, who had heard the news and had rushed over. As they looked at Fang Xingjian entering the secret realm, contempt, shock, and doubt shone in their gazes.

In their minds, they were only thinking of one problem.

Could Fang Xingjian successfully complete the job transition and become a Windstorm Sword Hero?

...

After taking one step towards the sanctuary, Fang Xingjian could feel something in the air which was not usually there.

With each step that took him closer to the sanctuary, the feeling of the disturbance in the air got increasingly stronger, making him feel as if his heartbeat and blood flow were getting increasingly faster amidst all this restlessness.

However, with Fang Xingjian's current attributes and with the control of his body's movements, such a minor disturbance was unable to stop him. He took a few steps forward and went through the sanctuary's door with no hesitation.

Taking one step into the sanctuary, Fang Xingjian felt as if he had entered another world. The raging ether particles moved about in the air wherever they wished, releasing a limitless amount of information in the battered space.

Fang Xingjian's eyes saw the endless images of the past, the future and of numerous other worlds.

Fang Xingjian's ears heard the crying, shouting and screaming of numerous men, women, elderly, and children.

It was as if Fang Xingjian's body was being tugged on by countless people, as if he had entered hell and many ghosts were attempting to pull him into the afterlife.

This was the battered void. These were the ether particles.

Countless miniature black holes appeared and disappeared in an instant. They barely affected any material substance but yet remitted information.

However, Fang Xingjian had long since prepared for the situation in the secret realm. He was only stunned for a short moment before he disregarded all of it and continued to head deeper into the sanctuary.

The space in the secret realm was different from the usual space. From the outside, Fang Xingjian had thought that the sanctuary did not look too big. But when he entered, he realized that it was actually enormous.

Fang Xingjian headed to the center of the sanctuary, the area where the ether particles were the most active. The more active the ether particles were, the higher the chances of him completing the first transition.

On the way, Fang Xingjian felt that the energy disturbance in the surroundings was getting stronger. Although there were no material substances in the air, it actually felt as if something around him was continuously swirling, sometimes moving forward, sometimes backwards, sometimes pushing him from behind, sometimes obstructing his advance.

However, Fang Xingjian's strength attribute had reached 48 plus 4, for a total of 52 points. Even if a truck was in front him, he would still be able to easily lift it and move it out of the way, let alone if he was facing a mere energy disturbance.

Taking one step at a time towards the center of the sanctuary, Fang Xingjian then sat down on the floor cross-legged, controlling his breathing rhythm and his blood flow as he focused on circulating his Waves and mental cultivating technique.

Completing the transition in the secret realm required one to fully concentrate on circulating Waves and the mental cultivation method, thus finding a way to let one's Waves and mental cultivation method along with one's life frequency to get closer to a certain type of ether particles' frequency, eventually allowing one's own powers to move the nature's energy.

Fang Xingjian concentrated on the fluctuations coming from all over his body as he continued to communicate with the ether particles in the surrounding air.

If this has been outside, what he was doing at the moment would mostly be a complete waste of energy. But in the secret realm, the space was battered. And given that the ether particles were active like never before, Fang Xingjian felt that along with the circulation of his Waves and mental cultivation method, the whole sanctuary,

the whole space seemed to be fiercely trembling.

However, the Waves that he was circulating now were not the Mistral Windgod's Waves which should have been used to complete the transition into a Windstorm Sword Hero, but instead they were the Waves that he had just acquired and which had recently appeared on his Stats Window. It was a new type of Waves.

Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves level 1: after circulation, strength attribute will increase by 1 point, agility by 2 points, reaction by 1 point, endurance by 1 point and flexibility by 1 point.

This type of Waves was a basic type that was even stronger than the Mistral Windgod's Waves. However, unlike the latter, it would not offer the user the ability to control wind in the future.

The Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves sacrificed the ability to control wind in exchange for gaining more explosive energy as well as speed.

Therefore, regardless if it was in terms of attributes or Waves, Fang Xingjian had exceeded the requirements for the Windstorm Sword Hero. This had given him many expectations, allowing him to hope that he would have the chance of transitioning into into a job which was even stronger than the Windstorm Sword Hero.

"Come...

"Come...

"Ether particles...

"Give me the power I deserve!"

A faint breeze blew around Fang Xingjian. The next moment, that breeze turned into a raging violent wind. Countless air particles circled around Fang Xingjian's body, wholly encompassing him.

On his Stats Window, the potential points started jumping

furiously. However, it was a pity that he had contributed all his potential to Training techniques everyday, and did not have many. As such, after a few jumps, the number turned to zero. In fact, depleting potential during the the job transition process was something which had never happened before, in the entire course of history.

It was because there had been no one in the course of history who had foundations as strong as Fang Xingjian had, or who was as gifted as him.

The next moment, Fang Xingjian felt countless invisible forces drilling into his body, crushing his bones and flesh, his organs, blood vessels and nerves.

With a pfft, he suddenly spat out a large mouthful of blood.

...

After two whole hours, in contrast to the flurry in the sanctuary, Huang Lin and the others who were outside were unable to see any anomalies in the least, because of the secret realm's uniqueness.

Under Huang Lin's slightly nervous gaze, suddenly a human figure slowly walked out. That human figure was stumbling out of the sanctuary.

Huang Lin's expression turned grim as he immediately dashed out in a flash, grabbing onto Fang Xingjian's shoulders and supporting him.

Fang Xingjian looked pale. He was spewing fresh blood, looking as if he was gravely ill. Only his eyes were still bright and energized.

Huang Lin asked nervously, "What happened?"

Fang Xingjian looked at his Stats Window, and looked at the job which had appeared on his Stats Window - 'Windshadow Sword Divinity', as well his new specialty and techniques gains. He smiled and said, "I... I've succeeded..."

The next moment, his eyes rolled back and he fell unconscious.

Huang Lin furrowed his brows, saying nothing as he carried Fang Xingjian to his place, with a grim look on his face.

The Headmaster let out a sigh and disappeared as well.

Kaunitz looked at this scene and fell into a daze for a moment. Soon after he broke out in loud laughter, “Succeeded? Hahahaha, Barbara, have you heard of anyone who completed their first transition spewing blood as they walked out, and even passing out in the end?”

Barbara, at the side, smiled and said, “No. Only one situation fits the bill. The case when one fails the job transition and suffers from the effects of the ether particles’ backlash in the body.”

“A useless bum who could not even complete his first transition successfully.” The corner of Kaunitz’s lips curled up slightly as he coldly said, “Genius? I’d say he’s a useless bum. I reckon that there’s no need to carry on with the battle tomorrow.”

Jack and Anthony exchanged a glance, let out a sigh, then both chased after Huang Lin.

Chapter 59 Regaining Consciousness

Feeling like he was encompassed in warmth, as if he was submerged in boiling hot spring water, Fang Xingjian gradually opened his eyes and saw that as expected, he had been placed in a gigantic bath vat. A strong medicinal smell came from the bath vat, the deep dark-green-colored medicinal liquid continuously bubbled, as if it were to explode at any moment.

‘What the hell is this stuff?’

Although it did not look good, Fang Xingjian could feel that there was something similar to vital energy flowing into all of his body parts.

His body’s previously depleted potential, because of the insufficient amount when he had been going through the job transition in the secret realm, had not only recovered, but it had also accumulated a massive amount of medicinal properties, waiting for him to disperse and merge them with his body in his future cultivation, thus reinforcing it.

Seeing that Fang Xingjian had woken up, Huang Lin said in a serious tone, “Your job transition has failed and you have yet to recover from the serious injuries. Your organs, muscles and bones have all suffered the backlash effects from the ether particles.

“I’ve borrowed this medicine from the headmaster. Circulate your Waves and carefully absorb the medicinal properties to recover your injuries.

“With regards to the issue of the first transition, don’t think about it for now. There’ll be a way out.” It was obvious that after seeing Fang Xingjian’s internal injuries, Huang Lin had thought that his job transition had failed, making him suffer the backlash effects of the ether particles.

Hearing Huang Lin’s words, Fang Xingjian fell into a daze. He

took a look at his Stats Window, which had now become:

Name

Fang Xingjian

Age

16

Occupation

Windshadow Sword Divinity

Level

9

Strength

48+4

Agility

62+4

Reaction

47

Endurance

41

Flexibility

41

The attributes above come into effect once the Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves is activated

Due to Perfect Muscles, +4 in strength and agility (10% of the endurance attribute)

Techniques:

Nurturing Sword Techniques

31 sets

Training Sword Techniques

4 sets

Reduced Force Field

Boundaries Negation

Specialities:

Genius Swordsmanship,

Elementary Survival Instinct,

Internal Healing,

Internal Training,

Sword Specialist,

High Agility Motion Vision,

Heightened Reflex,

Perfect Muscles,

Single Sword World Subjugation

Potential

8,500 point increase/day

Waves

Level 1 Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves

Mental Cultivation Method

Level 1 Ice Age Meditation Art

Windshadow Sword Divinity was the job which Fang Xingjian had obtained in the sanctuary. Fang Xingjian did not know what the job progress was yet, but after the he had succeeded the job transition, he had only gained two techniques and one specialty.

One of the techniques was a common technique across all jobs for the first transition, namely the Reduced Force Field, which was the basic form of communication with the ether particles. At the stage

of the first job transition, everyone would have this technique. It was also a technique that could not be leveled up, so there was nothing special about it.

The other technique was called Boundaries Negation, another technique which also had no level tagged to it.

Boundaries Negation: allows one's body to overcome physical and material boundaries in an instant. Under the enhancement brought by ether particles, it expends 1000 potential points every second, fully accelerating the body's vital energy and blood; agility reaches the limit of what one's body can endure, ignoring the limits of the other attributes.

The agility attribute raised the speed at which one's muscles could contract and burst out with force. However, if a person wished to attack quickly or run quickly, other than a quick muscle contraction speed, one's muscles would also need to have a high resistance, a high explosive energy, high agility, high flexibility et cetera.

And Boundaries Negation allowed for instantaneous outburst of the vital energy and blood, ignoring all of the restrictions of the other attributes. It based itself on the agility attribute, allowing the cultivator's agility to burst out and stretch to its very extremes.

This was obviously a very powerful technique. Just the fact that it expended 1000 potential points per second showed how powerful this technique was. However, Fang Xingjian would need to test it out himself before he could understand the actual characteristics. However, this also meant that he would need to accumulate potential during his usual training to gain the possibility of activating Boundaries Negation in the most crucial moments.

Although he only had one additional specialty, Fang Xingjian could tell how powerful the specialty 'Single Sword World Subjugation' was just from looking at its definition. It was much stronger than the Windstorm Sword Hero.

Single Sword World Subjugation: when a sword-type weapon is used and the worn armor is below ten kilograms, a force field will be produced which increases the user's speed by allowing ether particles to attract each other, forming a force field; each additional point in the agility attribute can provide up to a 2% increase in the user's movement and action speed.

Looking at this specialty, Fang Xingjian's breath started to quicken. It was different from the regular acceleration provided by the Windstorm Sword Hero's two specialties. The Single Sword World Subjugation provided an acceleration which increased as one's agility attribute got higher.

A 1 point increase in the agility attribute increased one's movement and action speed by 2%. Considering that Fang Xingjian's current agility attribute was at 66, his movement and action speed would increase by 132%, the only requirements being not to wear heavy armor, and to be equipped with a longsword.

What did the increase of movement and action speeds by 1.32 times mean? It meant that it was 2.32 times the original speed of the person. Regardless if it was movement speed, the speed of launching the attack, or one's explosive damage prowess, they were all increased by a couple of times in just an instant.

Moreover, this was still not the limit. As long as Fang Xingjian continued to raise his agility attribute, the effects of this specialty would continue to rise to higher levels, until his agility would reach an unbelievable state. This was a specialty that one could keep on using without looking down on it even up to the Divine level.

To sum it up, even if job progression was not taken into consideration, the job Windshadow Sword Divinity was already so strong that it was terrifying. To Fang Xingjian, it seemed even stronger than many of the second transition jobs in Demonic City.

From now onwards, he would only need to continue maintaining

the state where his body would automatically undergo sword training and Waves cultivation for twenty-four hours a day. It would thus allow his attributes to get increasingly stronger, along with his Waves. With the magnifying effects of the job's specialty, his battle prowess would get increasingly powerful as well.

The only thing that seemed to not be up to scratch was his mental cultivation technique. Mental cultivation methods were merely the training of the mind, so physical training of sword arts were of no help for this.

Therefore, after Fang Xingjian heard Huang Lin's words, he was stunned for a moment before he took another look at his Stats Window and then said, "But I did not fail. I succeeded in the job transition."

"No need to go on." Huang Lin sighed and said, "The Windstorm Sword Hero is really too tough. There is nothing to it even if you failed. I've already applied for leave from the headmaster. From now on, you'll just need to focus on your recuperation. I'll bring you to another academy to undergo training and complete your first transition..."

Although Fang Xingjian had failed in his job transition, to Huang Lin, he was still a peerless genius. Huang Lin still hadnot given up on him, but instead, was worried that Fang Xingjian would give up on himself.

"Although it is hard to change the Waves cultivation, it is not impossible. It's not as if there haven't been people who have done that in history. With your calibre, you'll definitely be able to do it if you spend more time on it."

"But I..."

"You don't have to be embarrassed. Just remember the lesson you've learnt this time." Huang Lin shook his head helplessly and said, "You must remember that common jobs are not that bad. There are many Divine level experts who also started off from

common jobs.”

“Sigh.” Fang Xingjian shook his head, no longer trying to interrupt Huang Lin. He reached out his hand, and lightly grasped the air.

With a crisp bang, it was as if an explosive had discharged in the air. A slight breeze blew from where Fang Xingjian had grasped and released the air explosion. Huang Lin turned wide-eyed instantaneously.

Fang Xingjian smiled briefly, once again making a grabbing motion midair. The whole lump of medicinal liquid in the vat looked as if it had been grabbed and lifted up by an invisible gigantic hand as it floated like a balloon.

“Force field? Reduced Force Field!”

Huang Lin was still a bit hesitant at first, but the next moment, that familiar feeling told him that his judgement was not wrong.

“If you can perform the Reduced Force Field, it means that you did not fail your job transition and that you have succeeded in your job transition?”

“Mmm.” Fang Xingjian said, “I...”

“Windstorm Sword Hero! To think that you’ve succeeded in the job transition to become a Windstorm Sword Hero!” Huang Lin’s eyes went wide until they reached the size of a frog’s, as he stared at Fang Xingjian in slight of disbelief.

Seeing Huang Lin’s gaze, Fang Xingjian nodded. He did not mention anything about the Windshadow Sword Divinity. “Mmm, I’m now a Windstorm Sword Hero.”

“Excellent, excellent excellent.” Having received a positive reply, Huang Lin was overjoyed. However, seeing that Fang Xingjian was trying to stand up, he immediately pushed him back across the air with his palm, and it was as if there was a pressure from a big mountain pushing Fang Xin back into the medicinal vat once

again.

“Do you know that the only three Windstorm Sword Heroes in the Empire’s history all became Divine level experts?”

“This means that it’s very likely that you will be able to complete the third transition and become a Divine Level expert as well.

“No no no, you must stay and soak in this and recuperate. This vat of medicine has taken me a lot of effort to prepare. Not only can it heal your internal injuries, it can also raise the effects of your future cultivation by a great degree.

“Haha, Windstorm Sword Hero.

“You must let your body recover well, so that no internal injuries are left.

“Mmm, now that everyone has completed the first transition, the next thing is to learn Killing techniques. I’ll help you take a look to see which Killing techniques are suitable for a Windstorm Sword Hero.”

Huang Lin was pacing to and fro, smiling non-stop, with his usual mighty disposition. It was because he understood well what the words ‘Windstorm Sword Hero’ meant – a Divine level expert. There were no more than ten Divine level experts in the whole Empire, and even though it was merely a possibility for Fang Xingjian to become one, it was already sufficient to make Huang Lin’s cold face break into smiles.

After pacing for a few steps, he dashed out in haste. No one knew where he was headed to.

Fang Xingjian had not expected Huang Lin to be so excited, and he was secretly glad that he had not told him his actual job.

Windshadow Sword Divinity was a first transition job he had not seen in the piles of materials he had gone through. Thinking about this, he simply fell backwards, submerging his body in the medicinal vat, feeling the endless vital energy continuously seep

into his body.

He even noticed that on his Stats Window, his potential had been gradually increasing by 1 point every ten minutes.

As a matter of fact, yesterday, he had not thought that when he was going through the job transition for Windshadow Sword Divinity, his potential would be absorbed to perform an intrinsic transformation of his physical body. This was why his vital energy and blood had been forcefully absorbed by the ether particles, which in turn led to him suffering internal injuries.

However, his blood and vital energy had been replenished by the various precious medicinal items Huang Lin had brought. In addition, he had the specialty Internal Healing, which could be used to heal the injuries to his organs. In fact, more than half of his internal injuries had already been healed.

However, seeing that his potential could increase by itself, Fang Xingjian was still astonished, 'How much did this vat of medicinal liquid actually cost?' Then, he recalled Huang Lin's overjoyed reaction earlier and silently exclaimed to himself, 'This is the first time that I've seen Teacher acting like this. Seems like the first transition job Windstorm Sword Hero is more important than how I had imagined it would be.'

The Windstorm Sword Hero was already sufficient to astonish the world. If Huang Lin and the others knew that Fang Xingjian's job was the Windshadow Sword Divinity, which had never appeared in the course of history, and that it even came equipped with specialities and techniques which they would see as horrifying, their chins would probably drop off, or the knowledge would even cause a grand storm with him in the center.

The next moment, he had already fully submerged himself in the medicinal liquid, focusing solely on absorbing its essence.

Chapter 60 The Day of the Duel

On the second morning, Fang Xingjian crawled out of the vat filled with medicinal liquid already gone transparent. He asked the servants for Huang Lin's whereabouts, but with no result.

Thus, after finishing breakfast, he headed towards the classroom.

After the three months deadline was up and everyone had completed the first transition, according to the school's regulations, other than attending specialisation classes, techniques classes and physical training classes, the next most important thing was for them to, pick up the Knights' actual techniques for killing their enemies – the Killing techniques. Doing this every morning was the second phase of their mission after they had completed their first transition.

The Nurturing Path was equivalent to spring, strengthening the constitution and nurturing the spirit, keeping the individual fit and healthy, and accumulating potential.

The Training Path was equivalent to the summer, wrecking one's physical body, stimulating one's potential and strengthening one's attributes.

The Amassing Path was equivalent to autumn, the Waves and mental cultivation methods and Waves moving amidst the calm, the connection with ether particles, the complement to one's job, the comprehension of extraordinary strength, each with its own miraculous usage.

The first three paths were all paths helping one to become stronger, focusing on gaining strength. It was the complete foundation of a powerful expert from top to bottom, inside-out.

On other hand, Killing techniques were the real techniques used for combat, purely with the scope of destruction – techniques meant for killing opponents.

So, regardless of how powerful Fang Xingjian's job was, or how much his current talent and experience in sword arts had already far surpassed the instructors', he still decided to listen to their introduction of Killing techniques.

However, as of yet, he still did not know that his job transition the previous day had been witnessed by too many people. Everyone in the academy thought that he had failed his job transition.

Fang Xingjian was still contemplating what his next step ought to be.

In his current state, his sword arts and Waves could undergo training in his body without rest for twenty-four hours a day, and his attributes would increase every five to six days. His Waves would also level up every ten or twenty days or so. His mental cultivation method was the only one for which he needed to specially find some time each night in order to train it.

Therefore, now he had much more time during the day, which he could use for training in new areas. Fang Xingjian was contemplating what type of training he ought to be using this extra time on.

'Hmm, should I pick up new sword techniques? There's still ten or more sword techniques in the academy which I've yet to learn. Should I look through them and see if any of them don't overlap with my current ones?

'Or should I approach the other instructors, and use my higher attributes to gain even more specialities?'

Attributes were one's foundation, while specialities were the special effects. Fang Xingjian had already built up an exceptional foundation, thus preparing for actual combat. What he had learned so far would augment his power, enhance his physical strength, increase his movement speed, power up his techniques, strengthen his physique... But at the end of the day, he still did not have a true technique for killing his enemies.

‘I should take a look at Killing techniques first, and find out how to train those...

‘I only have four years and three months left. I need to be faster... faster...

‘Sword techniques, tempering attributes, Waves cultivation are already circulating by themselves every day. As for my mental cultivation method, I’ll need to put in hard work every night...

‘Nurturing sword techniques automatically circulate daily, tempering my attributes...

‘Waves automatically circulate daily, modifying my vital frequency. The Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves primarily emphasized on increasing the agility attribute. After the Waves form a connection with the ether particles, the higher its level, the faster my speed will be.

‘I still need to put in more effort in training my mental cultivation method. The higher its level, the more rational and clear-headed I will be in battle, and the less I will make mistakes or be affected by negative emotions. In addition, I have too many negative emotions suppressed within my heart, so for my mental cultivation method, I’ll have to unleash all my negative emotions in order to speed up my cultivation.

‘My attributes are very high, and with my great speed there shouldn’t be anyone who’s gone only through the first transition who would be able to surpass me. And if I execute Boundaries Negation, my speed will be even faster...

‘What I lack right now is a Killing technique that could be a good match for my great speed.’

Fang Xingjian’s sword techniques relentlessly circulated throughout his entire body. He lowered his head and contemplated his future training plans. He seemed to be extremely focused, to the point that he did not notice that wherever he passed by, people

would point their fingers at him and gossip about him, throwing him looks of ridicule, sarcasm or disdain. There were also some who looked at him with gazes of pity.

However, he did not even notice these as he walked. In fact, since with his brain's invigoration, he could feel the ether particles constantly disappearing and reappearing, maintaining a dynamic equilibrium.

When he was halfway to his destination, Fang Xingjian discovered that his Stats Window was flickering. He had just leveled up.

‘That’s right. I have been at the peak of level 9 for a very long time. Now that I’ve completed my first transition, it’s natural for me to be able to level up.

‘And since my experience bar for level 9 was maxed out, and I’ve continued to cultivate my sword arts internally for the few hours I’ve had since last night, I’ve managed to level up.’

Cultivating various techniques, attributes, specialties or even reading or learning would naturally allow one to earn experience and level up. Naturally, this method of leveling up was extremely slow, and one could only level up once or twice each year. It could not even compare to the experience gained from attacking and killing powerful beasts or other humans.

Even before his transition, Fang Xingjian’s experience bar was already at the peak of the level 9. Given the previous night’s transition, coupled with the fact that on the way his body was unceasingly training by itself, he had leveled up.

After leveling up, he discovered that the job progress from the Windshadow Sword Divinity had only affected the agility attribute. However, it was a full 11 point increase!

Therefore, his agility attribute had soared to a tremendously terrifying 73 points.

And as he thought of how the 11 point increase in agility would further enhance his moving and action speed by 22%, Fang Xingjian was dumbstruck, and gradually felt a sense of joy building up.

‘This speed... is simply terrifying...’

He continued to cultivate and contemplate as he walked, finally arriving at the classroom. Fang Xingjian pushed open the door with a bang, and saw the nine Knights of Class 256 all turn their gazes towards him.

Traces of mockery appeared in Kaunitz’s eyes. He was looking at Fang Xingjian as though he was a clown.

Jack’s and Anthony’s brows furrowed slightly. They had rushed to Huang Lin’s residence yesterday, but had been chased out by Huang Lin who was fully focusing on taking care of Fang Xingjian. Hence they still had no idea what Fang Xingjian’s current state was.

A look of cool indifference was reflected in Robert’s eyes. Ever since Kaunitz had caught up to his progress, completing his first transition and later defeating him, Robert had been working hard, practicing day and night. He now only had one thought in mind – to defeat Kaunitz.

On the platform, Dick, who was currently explaining the theory of the Killing Path, slightly squinted his eyes as he spoke, “Fang Xingjian, this course on the Killing Path is only open to those who have completed their first transition. Haven’t you come to the wrong place?”

Kaunitz faintly smiled. His underling Zhou Yong who had also come from the Tresia Academy stood up as he berated, “Fang Xingjian, have you forgotten what you said back then? You failed to turn up for the duel, yet you still have the face to come here? If I were you, I would quickly pack my stuff and get out of the academy.”

Carter, who had previously gone along with Zhou Yong to taunt Fang Xingjian outside his villa also stood up and said, “Fang Xingjian, do you think that a small fry like you would really be able to stay in the academy after having entered through the backdoor?”

“I’ve said so long ago, after removing the genius disguise you put up, you are nothing. A small fry will always remain a small fry. To think you’re still fantasizing about becoming a Windstorm Sword Hero...”

Even before they had ended their tirade, traces of killing intent started flickering in Fang Xingjian’s eyes.

“Who said I’ve failed to turn up? How come I didn’t know about that?” He replied softly, “Today is the day of the duel. Come, Kaunitz, just as I’ve promised, I will give you a handicap, one hand only. Then, I will break your ribs one by one.”

Chapter 61 Fire

“Boasting without shame.” Kaunitz could not even bother to take a single look at Fang Xingjian. In his eyes, Fang Xingjian who was rumored to have ‘failed the job transition’ could barely even compare to characters like Carter or Zhou Yong. He was already eliminated, and a useless bum from head to toe.

However, what Fang Xingjian had said was true. The actual time for the battle was today, and not last night. It was just that after everyone had seen Fang Xingjian ‘failing the first transition’ the night before, they all subconsciously felt that he had failed to honor the appointment.

Class 256’s instructor, Dick, said coldly, “Fang Xingjian, you have failed the job transition and no longer have the right to continue staying in this class. Leave quickly! Stop with the endless pestering.

“As for your villa, maids, and monthly resources, I’ve already submitted an application to cancel them. Those resources were not meant to be wasted like this.”

“To think that his class’s Prefectural Champion had failed the first transition. If not for Kaunitz’s ingenious performance, his situation in the academy would now be even worse. Thinking of his teaching appraisal for the current year, Dick’s gaze towards Fang Xingjian turned more and more into one of disgust.

Fang Xingjian only looked at Kaunitz coldly, his gaze full of unspoken provocation. He had been fully focused on his training all this time, but that did not mean that he was unaware of the rumors outside. He was not a robot, but rather a person who had been left with even more fury, vengeance, and negative emotions than normal people.

However, for the sake of fully devoting his efforts towards the first transition, Fang Xingjian had been unwilling to waste any of

the time on him. After all, he barely had slightly more than four years left.

But now that he had finally completed the first transition successfully, it was only obvious that he would no longer have any more reservations, nor would he continue to tolerate the other party's impertinence.

Moreover, the Ice Age Meditation Art he was cultivating required bravery and diligence, and the elimination of all grievances in one's mind through physical force. How could he then allow others to cause him humiliation as they wished?

"Haha," Seeing Fang Xingjian's provocative gaze, Kaunitz stood up. A violent raging force field swept across the surrounding air, releasing a pitter patter of explosive sounds. Even the tables and chairs in the surroundings were all being squashed and deformed, making creaking sounds.

"Don't anger me. Fang Xingjian, the one thing you shouldn't have done in this life is to anger me." Kaunitz lifted his chin, staring down at Fang Xingjian with a gaze filled with a sense of superiority and said, "Seeing that we are classmates, I'll give you one last chance. Apologise and admit your mistake, and I'll let you leave with dignity."

"Kaunitz..." Fang Xingjian's eyes squinted slightly as he lightly replied, "No need to say any more. Let's meet on the arena."

Dangerous glints flashed continuously in Kaunitz's eyes. He took several steps forward, his Reduced Force Field like a gust of raging wind, pushing against Fang Xingjia and pressing down on his shoulders, limbs, and spine.

"As you wish. Fang Xingjian, today will be the day you'll never ever wish to remember." Kaunitz checked the time and said, "In one hour, we'll meet on the arena. I hope that you will not stand me up again." After finishing his statement, he smirked at Fang Xingjian, satisfied.

He wanted to ensure that there was sufficient time for enough people to gather, so that even more people could witness Fang Xingjian being squashed under his feet. He wanted to vent his frustrations caused by Fang Xingjian previously defeating him in a single move. Kaunitz wanted to let everyone know that in the whole of Class 256 and in this year's Prefectural Selection, only him, Kaunitz, was a true genius.

Kaunitz turned to leave while Barbara, Ferdinand and the others followed behind him. Barbara looked towards Fang Xingjian with a cruel smile, mimicking the gesture of cutting one's throat.

Today, Fang Xingjian was dead meat to them.

Dick passed by Fang Xingjian, gave a cold snort and said, "Don't know what you're trying to do." His gaze was full of contempt towards Fang Xingjian. To him, it seemed that the latter had completely failed his job transition, and had gone crazy to actually dare to come to the classroom and stir up a scene, seeking his own humiliation.

'But it's also good that Fang Xingjian will be chased away like this. A useless bum who failed his job transition would just be a burden on the results of my appraisal if he were to stay.'

Jack and Anthony came to Fang Xingjian's side, not saying much. They merely nodded and said, "Xingjian, be careful. It's said that Kaunitz has started learning Killing techniques since last month. Be careful of his Reduced Force Field."

The group headed in the direction of the arena. And the news of Fang Xingjian still insisting on having the arena battle with Kaunitz, even after the former had failed his job transition, had spread like wildfire throughout the whole Royal Knight Academy.

Knowing that there was going to be a battle, the many staff members and students who saw them on their way all followed curiously. They looked at Fang Xingjian as if he were an idiot.

“How many years has it been since there’s been a battle in the academy?”

“I thought that this battle had long been cancelled, what with Fang Xingjian failing his job transition and all. I never would have thought that he had such guts.”

“Guts? I’d say it’s foolishness. One who has yet to complete the job transition challenging one who has already gone through the first transition... He’s simply courting death.”

As Fang Xingjian and the others gradually walked towards the arena, more than ten Knights were already there. Instructors, students and members of staff were coming as well.

And when those who had arrived saw Fang Xingjian and Kaunitz, their gazes were filled with varied emotions.

“Didn’t Fang Xingjian fail his job transition? He’s still looking for a battle with Kaunitz?”

“Is this fellow crazy?”

“It’s such a pity for Fang Xingjian. If not for the fact that he’d insisted on choosing the Windstorm Sword Hero, he wouldn’t be in such a pathetic state.”

“This is what’s called biting off more than one can chew.”

There were only about one to two hundred students and instructors in KIRST Royal Academy. Counting maids, chefs, craftsmen and other members of staff, the personnel would definitely not exceed one thousand people. There weren’t really that many people, so the news that Fang Xingjian and Kaunitz were going to continue with their battle spread very quickly throughout the entire academy.

Fang Xingjian did not pay them any heed. After arriving at the arena, he sat down cross-legged on the floor, and closed his eyes as he started his cultivation.

He started circulating his sword arts again and again, throughout his whole body. Under his Knight attire, his veins, muscles and bones were trembling endlessly, entangling, twisting as he circulated the sword techniques and Waves.

More and more people rushed over, including instructors like Dick. Even Hogan from the City Guards Institution came to the arena.

Seeing Hogan walk over, Jack's gaze flickered as he asked, "Boss, why are you here?"

"Of course, to teach a class. Although it's merely in name, I am still the academy's instructor and have to come a few times every month." Hogan said as he took a glance at Fang Xingjian, who was cultivating with his eyes closed.

He had thought well of this person since the Prefectural Selection, and had even had a bet with Dick, winning 100 gold. He tried to advise, "Fang Xingjian, cultivation is not a matter of speed. Do you want me to go have a talk with Kaunitz and the others? You can focus on your recuperation first, and then battle it out with him after completing your job transition. Don't act on impulse."

Anthony followed, saying, "That's right, Xingjian. We can bring up the battle at a later date. Why do you need to rush into it? Even if you're in a rush, you should still allow yourself time to recuperate from yesterday's injuries." They had seen for themselves how Fang Xingjian had spewed a few big mouthfuls of blood the previous day.

"It doesn't matter."

Fang Xingjian suddenly open his eyes wide, giving this simple answer before he headed up to the arena, saying, "Kaunitz, come up. Let's not waste the time."

He shook all the muscles over his body, releasing a series of crackling sounds, and taking big steps up the arena.

His display of strength was extremely violent and raging, but his mind was calm as he analyzed all of Kaunitz's actions in his mind, continuously simulating what would be happening during the course of battle later.

Kaunitz frowned slightly. It had only been half an hour. But although it was not exactly what he had planned, taking a look at the more than one hundred people below the arena, he was not willing to step back either. With a light tap of one of his legs, he cut across the air in a beautiful arch, and appeared on the arena.

He was wearing his blue Knight attire, with three longswords attached to each side of his waist. His golden hair fluttered in the wind as he broke into a cold smile.

Looking at Fang Xingjian, he said, "Today, we'll fight it out. I'll let everyone know... who is the real genius in this year's Prefectural Selection..."

Chapter 62 Empire's Divine Weapon

More than ten minutes before Fang Xingjian and Kaunitz would start their battle, Huang Lin was rushing excitedly towards the Headmaster's office.

He wanted to tell the Headmaster that Fang Xingjian had successfully completed the transition and had become a Windstorm Sword Hero.

However, the very moment he dashed into the office, the scene before him made him slightly furrow his brows.

A grandly dressed white-haired woman was sitting with poise face to face with the Headmaster. The woman's brows were very thick and dense, but her eyes were elongated and thin like a fox's. Her face, filled with wrinkles, was a clue that she was far from young.

Sitting next to the woman was the white-bearded old man who had doubted Fang Xingjian from the start during the third stage of the Prefectural Selection, but who had later been envious of Huang Lin for getting himself a disciple, eventually inciting his daughter to try to get closer to Fang Xingjian.

When Huang Lin saw the longsword embedded with colorful gemstones at that woman's waist, his brows furrowed.

"Tresia Clan's Rebecca... Why are you here?" She was Rebecca Tresia, one of Tresia Clan's strongest existing warriors, with the powers of a first transition level 19, and also Kaunitz's aunt.

Although she had not succeeded in completing the second transition, she had been at the pinnacle of the first transition for tens of years. As a well-known first transition expert, she had been building up on her attributes, and had been putting in hard work in order to acquire specialities. Their accumulation, tens of years of training was not something to be trifled with.

Even some of the youngsters who had just completed the second transition would most likely not be her match.

“Oh? Isn’t this Master Huang Lin?” Seeing that Huang Lin had entered, Rebecca smiled and said, “It’s been some time since we’ve last met.”

Watching the scene, the Headmaster smiled and said, “Lin, you’ve come at a perfect time. Adelaide will be retiring. We’ve invited Rebecca to take on the role of the sword arts instructor from now on. You know each other as well. She’s from the renowned Tresia Clan and has exceptional sword skills, she’s very suitable for the job.”

Rebecca smiled and said, “Headmaster is exaggerating with his compliments, haha. We’re just discussing the problem of cutting down on the academy’s expenditure. Since Master Huang Lin is here, we can discuss it together.”

“Reducing expenditure?” Huang Lin said coldly.

“That’s right. Take for example the Prefectural Champion Fang Xingjian. Since he has failed his job transition, he should no longer continue to enjoy the treatment Prefectural Champions enjoy.” Rebecca’s tone was sharp, with the same aggressiveness as if she were performing sword techniques.

Her words were a form of direct confrontation with Huang Lin. “Those resources could be better spent on other more talented students.”

Huang Lin smiled coldly, looking at Rebecca, “Haha, for example, Kaunitz?”

“That’s right. I do not differentiate people in terms of how close they are to me. Although Kaunitz is my nephew, since he has great talent, enough to complete the first transition within ten days and bring his Waves cultivation to level 3 within three months, I think that the academy should allocate more resources to him and aid his

progress rather than wasting them on a certain useless bum.”

“Hmmmmmm, useless bum.” Just when Huang Lin was planning to share the news that Fang Xingjian had completed his job transition successfully, an instructor walked in and said, “Headmaster, Fang Xingjian is battling on the arena with Kaunitz.”

“What? What are they trying to pull?” Headmaster’s brows furrowed.

Rebecca spoke up, “Kaunitz is a sensible fellow, it’s impossible for him to be the one to take the initiative to bully someone else. It must be that Fang Xingjian provoked him. But the academy’s rules are such that one cannot intentionally cripple or seriously injure another in the battle arena. Master Huang Lin, there’s no need for you to worry. At most, Kaunitz will just give him a small warning, and won’t do much to him.”

“Haha!” Huang Lin could not help but break out in laughter. “Are you sure it’ll be Kaunitz who’ll be teaching Fang Xingjian a lesson?”

Rebecca’s brows furrowed. Although she was slightly doubtful seeing the other party’s attitude, she still said, “Isn’t it true? Fang Xingjian failed his job transition and isn’t even able to perform Reduced Force Field. As such, how could an ordinary person like him be able to pit against a Knight who has actually gone through the first transition?”

Huang Lin only looked at her and laughed coldly, “Then how about this. You feel that Kaunitz is the most talented one in this batch, but if Fang Xingjian won against him, it would prove that Fang Xingjian is better. Headmaster...” He looked towards the Headmaster and said, “How about regardless of who wins, we’ll put the winner’s name in this year’s slot for the Empire’s Divine Weapon? Anyway, none of those in this batch has an Empire’s Divine Weapon yet.”

Empire’s Divine Weapons. They were superb weapons forged by

the Empire's Weaponry for powerful Warriors. They were legendary weapons which could communicate with ether particles, and which could display extraordinary powers.

However, such weapons needed to be specially designed and manufactured, and one would have to expend an immense amount of resources in order to make them. Usually, only one student recommended by each academy would be able to enjoy this privilege, and usually there would be only one or two slots for this. It was extremely precious.

Although Rebecca was suspicious of Huang Lin's attitude, she only nodded and said, "That's how it should be."

Seeing that both of them had agreed, the Headmaster did not object, but said, "Both Kaunitz and Fang Xingjian are extremely talented, their generation's most exceptional students. If we have to decide on who in this batch is deserving of the Empire's Divine Weapon, we should definitely choose from the two of them."

"Then it's decided." Huang Lin smiled, heading out. "Let's go take a look at their battle."

Rebecca frowned, thinking to herself, 'What does this old chap mean? Could it be that he really thinks that Fang Xingjian will be able to defeat Kaunitz even though he has yet to complete the first transition? Impossible. It's definitely impossible.'

The Headmaster also stood up and smiled at Rebecca, "Then let's go. Let's go and have a look at their battle."

All of them were powerful Knights and Conferred Knights who had gone through either their first or second transition. Even if they took small steps, their speed would still be exceptional. In but a moment's time, they had reached the battle arena.

Both Fang Xingjian and Kaunitz were standing on the arena.

Kaunitz looked at Fang Xingjian and said, "Today, we'll battle it out. I'll let everyone know... Who is this Prefectural Selection's

true genius...”

Fang Xingjian said with indifference, “Shut your trap, you...”

After Fang Xingjian said the word ‘you’, Kaunitz’s expression suddenly changed. The air was split open and a loud cry pierced the atmosphere. He only felt a raging wind blowing towards him, and black shadows appeared before him, as if all light had instantly been blocked by something.

“speak...”

With a loud boom, as if everything was being played in slow motion, one could see Kaunitz’s mouth open a little bit at a time, his pupils contracting. Fang Xingjian’s right fist landed on his stomach, even making his back bend outwards.

“too...”

Kaunitz’s body flew backwards from the heavy blow, his Reduced Force Field bouncing out unconsciously in all directions. Countless air explosions were released, and a series of invisible shockwaves flashed through the air. It was an anomaly which appeared only when air currents flowed at extremely high speeds.

But no matter how the Reduced Force Field was sent out, no matter how many explosions it created, Fang Xingjian was like a rock, freely allowing the force field to put pressure on his body, yet not being affected at all, as if it was merely a breeze blowing at him.

“much...”

It was as if Fang Xingjian’s right hand had transcended the boundaries of time and space. With over 70 points of agility and the specialty to allow him over 2.4 times his usual movement and action speed, his right arm had entirely become a series of blurred images. Just when Kaunitz had been punched once and had flown back over ten centimeters, Fang Xingjian’s right arm had already moved slightly, and once again grabbed onto Kaunitz’s head.

“crap...”

When he finished his sentence with ‘you speak too much crap’, Fang Xingjian’s fingers were already fixed on Kaunitz’s brain like steel bars. The latter’s pupils were still contracting, and he had yet to react to the first punch in his stomach, which Fang Xingjian had hit with his powerful right arm, when Fang Xingjian started dragging Kaunitz by the head and smashing him into the ground.

Chapter 63 Battle

Kaunitz's body was still flying backwards from the effects of the previous punch, when Fang Xingjian grabbed his head and smashed it to the ground with brute force.

His head was facing downwards and his body upwards. His whole body seemed to have been stretched a little in that instant. He gave out a horrible cry, and at the next moment, his whole face had already smashed onto the surface with great impact.

With a boom, his head crashed against the ground. Under Fang Xingjian's raging strength, his head split the ground open. And when rocks and sand were sent flying, Fang Xingjian sank Kaunitz's head into the ground.

Fang Xingjian released a breath, feeling exhilarated. Seeing that Kaunitz was still trembling non-stop, he took a step forward and once again stepped down on Kaunitz's head when he attempted to lift it up, sending it back into the ground.

At that moment, Fang Xingjian seemed to be extremely wild and unrestrained. However, his mind was extremely calm. With the circulation of the Ice Age Meditation Art, his brain controlled each of his movements as if he were a robot. Kaunitz's every single move, the tremble of each muscle, each bone, were all within Fang Xingjian's control.

And along with him stepping on Kaunitz, Fang Xingjian only felt that his heart had reached a state of understanding, where his mind was very calm and relaxed. On the Stats Window, the Ice Age Meditation Arts' experience was increasing at a never seen before speed.

"It'll level up after a few more times." Fang Xingjian smiled, twisting his right foot on the back of Kaunitz's head once again. He immediately felt much better.

“Ahhh!” Kaunitz’s eyes were bloodshot. Fang Xingjian had not thought of killing or crippling him, since it was against the academy’s rules. Therefore, not only was Kaunitz not seriously injured, he was still quite clear-minded due to his remarkable physique.

But it was because of this that he was now even more furious. His eyes were that one would think that blood would be dripping out any moment now. He opened his mouth to release an infuriated roar, wanting to say, “Ahh! I’m going to kill you!”

However, it was merely a ‘thought’. In fact, he had been unable to speak a single word, since the moment Kaunitz opened his mouth to let out a bellow, Fang Xingjian exerted strength on his leg, sinking his head even deeper into the soil, thus filling his mouth with soil and rendering him unable to speak with the only option of making muffled sounds.

‘Fang Xingjian!’ Kaunitz bellowed in his heart, his emotions of fury almost blasting his chest apart. All of his energy suddenly erupted, and four blurred shadows suddenly flashed behind him. It was his job Six Armed Asura’s technique, which could form four additional arms with ether particles.

Once the four arms were formed, they immediately drew out the longswords at Kaunitz’s waist. Together with his two arms, they traced a series of flashing sword webs, caging in towards Fang Xingjian.

The Six Armed Asura’s newly formed ether particle arms each had the same strength and speed as the practitioner’s own arms. At that moment, it was as if there were six Kaunitzs attacking Fang Xingjian at the same time, each of them displaying different sword techniques, forming layers of sword webs and caging in from all directions. It was well worth it to have the job ranked first in killing out of the seventeen jobs offered in the academy.

Sword light flashed, but under the illumination from the series of

silver colored light, Fang Xingjian was left unfazed. He even had the spare energy to differentiate the six sword techniques Kaunitz was displaying with his High Agility Motion Vision.

The next moment, Fang Xingjian drew his sword.

With a crisp clank. No, it actually was six clanks which had merged into one because of his extraordinary speed. Everyone present could feel a series of silver colored sword lights piercing through the air and setting it alight. In an instant, the six longswords in Kaunitz's hands were all sent flying.

Kaunitz was panic-stricken. His head was under Fang Xingjian's foot, and he could not see anything at all when he felt that the longswords in his hands had all been sent flying. However, he reacted immediately, grabbing the six longswords with the Reduced Force Field and thrusting them towards Fang Xingjian once again.

However, his full power physical attack was knocked away by Fang Xingjian in one hit. Moreover, they were both using Reduced Force Field, so it resulted in a series of noises of weapons dropping onto the floor. Kaunitz still intended to fight back when he felt an extremely violent force as heavy as a mountain pushing down on him, coming from the other party's foot, as if Fang Xingjian was trying to crush his head.

At that moment, the rage in his eyes was replaced by complete and utter fury. He dared not attack anymore, his limbs trembling and convulsing because of the excruciating unimaginable pain.

Fang Xingjian's movements had truly been too quick. So much so that most people below the arena had not been able to see them clearly. After a series of explosive booms, black shadows, and flashing silver lights, they suddenly saw Fang Xingjian stepping on Kaunitz, the latter unable to move.

He had not only been fully overpowered by Fang Xingjian in terms of attributes, but all his movements had been obstructed by

Fang Xingjian's, while the latter was circulating the Ice Age Meditation Art. He simply had no chance to fight back in the least.

At the same time, only two emotions, rage and calm, remained in Fang Xingjian's consciousness, making him feel calm and at ease at the same time.

It was as if his skin could feel the movement of each slight breeze in the surroundings, as if the sole of his foot was able to grasp each hint of struggle from all of Kaunitz's body. His mind was clear like never before. The Ice Age Meditation Art seemed to be circulating at its maximum speed right now.

Barbara was agape, making lifeless cries of ahh ahhh ahhh, as if she was unable to accept what was happening right in front of her eyes.

Zhou Yong and Carter, watched what was happening on the arena in a daze. When they saw Fang Xingjian's cold gaze sweeping over, a murderous aura came raining down, as if a tub of ice cold water was being poured down on them, freezing them over. The two of them let out a cry and retreated, not daring to have any further eye contact with Fang Xingjian.

Some ladies even simply turned their heads, not having the heart to see Kaunitz's terrible state.

Jack and Anthony were equally astonished as they looked at this scene. They had thought Fang Xingjian might be able to win, but they never would have considered the possibility of him having such a clear-cut win.

This did not look like a battle, but rather like a one-sided crushing.

Especially after seeing the brutal and ruthless side of Fang Xingjian in the arena, which was a far cry from the usually calm guy they knew.

Jack broke out in laughter, "Alright! This Kaunitz deserves a

thrashing!”

Anthony felt astonished, “Xingjian usually looks so calm. To think that his temper is actually so bad!”

Robert froze. Looking at how Kaunitz, the person who had defeated him, had suffered an instant knockout, his mind turned blank.

Hogan’s expression when looking at Fang Xingjian in the arena was similarly astonished. The latter did not show any signs of having failed the job transition. His speed was so fast that it actually matched the descriptions in the rumors.

On the other end, Dick gave out a surprised cry. He was recalling the speed that Fang Xingjian had earlier displayed, a speed so swift that it was against common sense. He stared straight at Fang Xingjian, his voice was so sharp and piercing that he could barely believe it himself.

“Fang... Fang Xingjian.. You’ve completed the job transition successfully? You transitioned into the Windstorm Sword Hero? How could this be?”

With a boom, the crowd below regained their senses, and it was as if oil had erupted in a metal wok. Amidst the commotion, everyone’s gazes were fixed on Fang Xingjian in the arena, looking at him as though they were looking at a monster. They were all waiting for Fang Xingjian’s reply.

“That’s right, I’ve already...”

“You little b*stard, let go of your leg!” A thunderous bellow resounded, and a piercing aura ray of clashing lightning and fire flew towards him as it cut through the air, slashing towards Fang Xingjian.

Before the sword Qi had arrived, the high temperature in the air had already made Fang Xingjian’s hair turn slightly curled, the trickles of electric currents making his four limbs feel slightly

numb.

Fang Xingjian's expression turned grim, and stepping heavily with both his legs, he made Kaunitz's head under his feet give out a crisp crackling sound as he was knocked out for good. Smoke and dust shooting up into the sky from the ground layers, as if they had exploded, Fang Xingjian appearing ten meters away in an instant.

However, that lightning and fire infused sword Qi did not miss. Instead, it made a turn and continued to chase in Fang Xingjian's direction.

At that moment, another series of slashes cut through the air, clashing with the lightning and fire infused sword Qi. After a series of explosions, the two cancelled each other out.

Huang Lin's cold voice rang out, "Attempting to kill my disciple... Do you want to die?"

A dignified white-haired middle-aged lady dressed luxuriously dashed into the arena, looking at Kaunitz in concern. When she realized that he had only suffered some skull cracks and fractures and that he had not died, she let out a sigh of relief.

However, when she heard Huang Lin's voice, she immediately let out a piercing scream.

"Old chap, look at the good thing your disciple has done. To think that he wanted to kill a Knight from the same batch as him in the battle arena! According to the academy's regulations, the tendons to his four limbs should be destroyed and he should be chased out of the academy." She had a savage expression, revealing raging and violent killing intent.

Looking at Rebecca, her figure merged with the image of Li Shuanghua in his mind. They were both old, they both sided with people they were closer to even though they were at fault, and they were both similarly vicious.

His experience in the Demonic City once again flooded his mind,

burning in his eyes.

Fang Xingjian smiled angrily and said, “If I’d wanted to kill him, he’d have long died a few hundred times. Moreover, who are you? What right do you have to be making irresponsible remarks here?”

While he spoke, his heart turned increasingly cold and increasingly calm. In his mind, he kept contemplating Rebecca’s performance and that prowess of the lightning and fire infused sword Qi from earlier, simulating what he ought to do if they were to engage in a battle.

“You shameless scum!! Shameless scum!!” Rebecca trembled in anger, pointing towards Fang Xingjian, saying, “Headmaster, take a look! Take a look! This is our Prefectural Champion for this batch? This person not only does not show respect to his teachers and seniors, he even stomps on his classmates! Such a dirty pig who goes against reasoning is fit to be the Prefectural Champion?”

Huang Lin smiled coldly, looking at Rebecca, at the same time drawing his long black metal sword slowly, and saying, “Shut your trap. If you had not suddenly attacked, how would Kaunitz have been hurt by my disciple’s stomping? Moreover, he is a super genius who has successfully transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero. Do you think that you have the right to drive him out of the academy? Old hag, don’t think I dare not kill you just because you’re old!”

With that, the metal sword in Huang Lin’s hand swept horizontally, slicing towards Rebecca.

Chapter 64 Fervent

As Huang Lin's sword swept out, his longsword seemed to instantly transcend time and space, as a towering, incomparably sharp sword Qi soared to the skies, giving everyone a horrifying feeling, as if the edge of a blade had just stroked past their faces.

Rebecca, who was bearing the brunt of the attack, suffered the greatest pressure. She could only feel that her Reduced Force Field seemed to be slashed apart by Huang Lin. Letting out a shout of terror, she frantically started retreating.

As she retreated, sword Qis with the nature of thunder and fire shot out of her fingers and zoomed towards Huang Lin's longsword.

But as the Qis of thunder and fire hit Huang Lin's sword with the force of a bazooka, they were slashed apart like tofu and then dissipated. Huang Lin had used a single slash to scatter the eighteen streams of sword Qis of thunder and fire, his sword's tip stopping less than one meter away from Rebecca's forehead.

Abject terror filling her eyes. It was only at this moment that she recalled Huang Lin's identity. He was a level 25 Sword Master who had completed the second transition, a Conferred Knight with the job 'Heaven Slaughtering Greatsword', an asura who had once killed over ten thousand enemies in a battlefield.

Her entire strength violently erupted. Her stats, with over 100 points in strength, agility, and flexibility, blew up like a bomb. The attributes which she had slowly accumulated through her daily sword technique practice over the decades, the heavenly ingredients and earthly treasures she had taken daily for her meals, the strong physique she had built up from the resources resulting in her body building up over the years... Even Knights who had recently passed their second transition would barely be her match.

But despite the eruption of her over 100 points in strength, speed, and flexibility attributes, she was still unable to escape from Huang Lin's deathly attack.

She saw the sword's tip inching closer and closer, shortening the distance between the two of them. Just as it was about to pierce into her forehead, a spotlessly white palm, akin to jade, appeared all of a sudden, its fingers pinching the edge of Huang Lin's sword, and countering his attack.

Saved, Rebecca could only feel cold perspiration drenching her entire body. Seeing the Headmaster blocking Huang Lin's sword for her, the previous terror and despair she had on her face immediately transformed into an anger so intense that it soared to the heavens.

An ear-piercing shriek escaped from her throat as she hysterically screamed, "HUANG LIN, YOU... HOW DARE YOU?" She pointed to Huang Lin as she screamed, "YOU WANT TO KILL ME? BECAUSE OF THIS LITTLE BASTARD, YOU ACTUALLY WANTED TO KILL ME?!"

"Aren't you still alive?" Huang Lin gave a cold laugh. With a shake of the sword in his hand, he withdrew his sword from the Headmaster's grasp.

The Headmaster smiled bitterly and said, "Alright. Although there may be some friction between the both of you, is there really a need to face each other with swords?"

"BUT HE WANTED TO KILL ME!" Rebecca continued screaming, her gaze filled with enmity as she stared at Huang Lin and Fang Xingjian. "To publicly try and kill a Knight conferred by the Empire! He is revolting! Huang Lin, just you wait. I will report this to the Knight's Association, I'm going to cripple you of your sword skills and send you to prison, and make you live in the most disgusting and dirty shit hole for all of your life!

"And you!" She turned and glared at Fang Xingjian, ruthlessly

cursing, “Little bastard, I’ll make you kneel and kowtow to Kaunitz! I’ll make you his slave forever!”

Fang Xingjian glared at her, the killing intent in his eyes circulating continuously. He had already marked this old hag as a target that he would certainly kill.

“Hmm?” Beside him, Huang Lin also had his eyes opened, and it seemed as if boundless sword light was circulating in his eyes. He took another step forward, sending gushes of killing intent as consistent as material objects towards Rebecca.

Rebecca let out a cry, dodging, and then grabbed Kaunitz as she retreated far into the distance. In several blinks’ time she was already several meters away.

Her resentful voice echoed like the owl or ghosts in the depths of the mountains, echoed.

“The two of you... Remember... This... this matter... is not over!...”

Looking at the fleeing Rebecca, Huang Lin laughed coldly. “Trash. It’s no wonder she is still unable to complete her second transition despite her being in her seventies or eighties.” He then turned towards Fang Xingjian and said, “However, although such old freak have yet to second transition, they have spent too much time at the peak of the first transition. With their age, and with their access to an inexhaustible amount of resources, they’ve raised their attributes to an extremely high level. You have just completed your first transition and still aren’t their match.

“However, with your talent as a Windstorm Sword Hero, just give it a year or two and then killing them will be as easy as killing dogs.”

Fang Xingjian seriously listened as he nodded, “Your disciple understands.”

Seeing how the master-disciple pair’s conversation was

brimming with killing intent, the Headmaster, standing at the side could only laugh bitterly yet again. “The two of you... really know how to bring me trouble. Don’t tell me you guys really intend to kill Rebecca?”

Huang Lin coldly stated, “This kind of trash is merely a small hurdle my disciple met on his path. She’s nothing to be concerned with even in a few years’ time, but if she doesn’t keep herself in check, I will immediately slaughter my way to the Tresia Clan.”

The Headmaster was helpless with Huang Lin’s temper, and could only turn his head to look at Fang Xingjian, talking to him in an amiable manner. “Fang Xingjian, you... have really completed your job transition and have become a Windstorm Sword Hero?” As he said this, excitement could be seen gleaming in his eyes.

The instructors, teachers and students at the side also curiously turned their heads in their direction. When Huang Lin and Rebecca had crossed blows earlier, their attention had already been drawn to that direction. However, how could they dare to come closer when two experts were in combat.

Now that the battle was over, after hearing the Headmaster’s question, everyone turned to look at Fang Xingjian.

Fang Xingjian smiled slightly. Suddenly, his legs turned blurry as he said, “It was a success., I’m already a Windstorm Sword Hero.”

Seeing how his legs had become blurry, everyone’s expressions immediately turned serious.

Over 70% of those in the crowd could not see clearly which leg had Fang Xingjian moved earlier.

The Headmaster laughed uproariously. To think that such a rare job like the Windstorm Sword Hero had actually appeared in the Prefectural Selection this time around. This was undoubtedly the highlight of his career. Even his Majesty in the Imperial Capital would surely give him great praises for his teachings.

The quick witted instructors all quickly stepped forward, fawning, “Congratulations, Headmaster! After over ten years or careful nurturing of the students in a bid to strengthen and boost Kirst’s martial arts, you’ve finally came across a heaven-defying genius like Fang Xingjian, and groomed him into a Windstorm Sword Hero!”

“Windstorm Sword Hero is only the beginning. Based on Fang Xingjian’s talent, after ten to twenty years, he will definitely be at the Divine level. At that moment, both Headmaster and Master Huang Lin will be the teachers of a Divine level practitioner, and all of us could also bask in the light.”

“Yeah, since our academy has been founded over two hundred years ago, not a single Divine level powerhouse has appeared. The Headmaster is truly the first one to have such success as a master of a generation, having students all over the world.”

Bootlicking after bootlicking followed. The previous disdain, contempt and pity in their eyes when they looked at Fang Xingjian had now transformed into envy, admiration and passion.

After all, they were not idiots. How could they deliberately choose to go against a Windstorm Sword Hero, someone who could become a Divine level powerhouse in the future?

To them, people like Rebecca who did not know any better were simply people who had turned into idiots from their martial arts practice.

Although some bootlickers were too obvious, the Headmaster and Huang Lin listened to them and accepted them all. The Headmaster in particular showed an extremely good mood, with a perpetual smile on his face.

The Headmaster calmly said, “Enough, enough! All of you can take your leave first.” He then glanced at Fang Xingjian, looking at him as though he was a precious treasure, and said, “Xingjian, follow me. You are a Windstorm Sword Hero and naturally we

must place more emphasis on your training from now on. We'll discuss and plan for your next steps together.

“Hmmm, I remember that the Windstorm Sword Hero has the specialty of increasing one's action and movement speed? It's just perfect that the KIRST City Lord has over tens of Wind Hawks. I'll get him to gift a few to you to eat, for you to nourish your body.”

Hearing the Headmaster's words, everyone in the crowd gulped. The Wind Hawks reared by the City Lord were extremely ferocious beasts, with levels as high as 20. They were the City Lord's most treasured pets.

But to think that with just that one word from the Headmaster, he would need to give them up as nourishment for Fang Xingjian!

The envious gazes from the crowd sent to Fang Xingjian instantly intensified by ten times.

But there was no choice. This was a Windstorm Sword Hero. The Windstorm Sword Hero which, in the entire course of history of the Empire, was only successfully transitioned into by three individuals; and all three of them had eventually become Divine level experts.

But now, finally, there was a fourth.

Chapter 65 News

With the Headmaster and Huang Lin taking their leave along with Fang Xingjian, in an instant, few people were left near the arena.

In a daze, Barbara kept looking in the direction of the arena, unable to believe what had just happened.

Suddenly, her expression turned vicious as she said, “How is this possible? How? How was an insignificant character like Fang Xingjian, who crawled out of the sewage, how was he able to... able to transition into a Windstorm Sword Hero?! How?!”

“There’s no reason for it.” Ferdinand, at the side, gave a cold snort and said, “Barbara, pull yourself together. Fang Xingjian is no longer an existence we can offend.”

“What?” Barbara turned her head and glared at Ferdinand, saying, “You coward! Do you wish to set down the flag that much? Isn’t it just a Windstorm Sword Hero? Even if there’s a possibility that he could become a Divine level expert, he has yet to become one! As long as our Fei Yang Academy’s and your Aristocrat Academy’s Elders...”

“Shut up, idiot! Do you want to send your clan’s Elders to their deaths? Did you grow a pig’s brain like that old hag Rebecca?” Ferdinand coldly said, “Fang Xingjian is already a Windstorm Sword Hero. A genius who has transitioned into such a first transition job is no longer someone whom clans like ours can interfere with anymore. It’ll be the job of the higher up characters central to the Empire.

“Don’t think about getting me involved in this. Let me tell you, you’d better not get your Elders to make any moves either. That isn’t venting your anger, that’s just sending them to their deaths.

Even only Huang Lin by himself would be able to wreck havoc in

your Fei Yang Academy.”

Having said this, Ferdinand turned and left, leaving Barbara turning green and white with anger, before she stomped her feet and finally left.

...

Fang Xingjian and Huang Lin followed the Headmaster to his office. Once they entered, Huang Lin openly said, “No need to say anything else. The other instructors are of no use. From now on, I’ll guide Fang Xingjian’s training myself, daily. You only need to give me the approval to use the academy’s resources as I wish.

And, you should quickly submit the request for the Empire’s Divine Weapon. I’d like to have Xingjian equipped with it before this year’s practical examination.”

Huang Lin turned towards Fang Xingjian and asked, “What other requests do you have? Just spill it all out, no need to be afraid. The Headmaster thinks very highly of you.”

The Headmaster smiled bitterly and shook his head as he turned towards Fang Xingjian and said, “Xingjian, rest assured. Your training from now on will be the academy’s main project. As long as you are able to get great results in the Regional Selection, I’ll get you whatever you wish.”

Fang Xingjian blinked, suddenly recalling the medicinal liquid Huang Lin had given him the night before, and said, “That medicinal liquid which can increase one’s potential, or treasures. Would the academy be able to give me these things? How about giving me one bucket everyday?”

Huang Lin’s eyes revealed hints of a smile, while the Headmaster trembled, his expression looking pale. The latter then spoke out, “Do you know how much it costs to get a bucket of those treasures each day? Even those big aristocrats in the Imperial Capital wouldn’t afford one bucket every day!

“How about this. Everyday, for breakfast, I’ll send you Soul Awakening Porridge stewed in the blood of ninety-nine types of ferocious beasts. That’ll at least increase your potential by 500 points daily.”

Fang Xingjian smiled, but he continued, “I still want a good weapon.” He drew out the longsword he had. It was already chipped and full of scratches. “This sword of mine is no longer any good.”

“For weapons, you can take your pick from the academy’s weaponry. That’s right, you still don’t know about the Empire’s Divine Weapon. I’ll be reporting to the Royal Weaponry. They’ll design a Divine Weapon for you, according to your requests.” The Headmaster smiled and said, “Don’t worry. The Empire’s Divine Weapon is something which you can use for life.”

Fang Xingjian nodded, “Then what about Killing techniques?”

“Don’t worry.” the Headmaster waved his hand and said, “You can take your pick from the twenty-six secret Killing arts passed down from KIRST Royal Academy.”

...

On the other end, within just a few hours’ time, news of Fang Xingjian’s successful transition into a Windstorm Sword Hero had already spread to every corner in KIRST, like a gust of raging wind.

In the academy’s building accommodated for family members, the white-bearded old instructor who had once examined Fang Xingjian in the third stage of the Prefectural Selection, and who was retiring this year, pushed the door open, walking in with a gloomy face.

Once he entered his house, his wife came to welcome him, saying, “Old man, I want to tell you something. Hylong is already at the first transition’s level 19 and has acquired the specialities Three Heads Six Arms, and High Speed Regeneration. He’ll be able

to breakthrough in the Regional Selection next year.

“I think he’s on quite good terms with your Li`er [1], I don’t think you should be objecting anymore.”

Li`er, standing at the side, turned all red. Although she was embarrassed, she still spoke out in a soft voice, “Father, Brother Hylong is handsome and he is good-natured. Now, he even may be able to breakthrough the Regional Selection. He really is a good choice.”

“Hylong?” The white-bearded old man frowned and suddenly asked, “I asked you to get closer to Fang Xingjian before. Why didn’t you?”

“Father!” Li`er frowned, feeling displeased, and said, “That Fang Xingjian is a poor chap from the countryside. He is ugly and dirty. How can he even compare to the gentle and considerate Brother Hylong?”

“And didn’t they say that he arrogantly challenged the transition for the Windstorm Sword Hero and that he failed it? An ordinary person like him would not even be close to Brother Hylong’s 10%.”

“That’s right, old man,” the married lady said, “Thank goodness we didn’t listen to you. If we had really let Li`er go with that Fang Xingjian, she would have gone through much hardship in the future.

“A person who can’t even complete the transition... I don’t even know what you see in him. Li`er was brought up by me. I’m not going to allow her to follow some stinky man and suffer hardships.”

“Suffer hardships...? Useless bum...?” The white-bearded old man let out a sigh and said, “You guys, are really as blind as bats. Fang Xingjian has successfully completed the transition to become a Windstorm Sword Hero. He’s even defeated Kaunitz just before.”

“What? How can that be possible?” the married woman cried out

in surprise with keen sparkling eyes. “He really became a Windstorm Sword Hero?”

The white-bearded old man coldly replied, “Of course. Don’t mention Hylong anymore. That chap would only be a first transitioned level 19 at best. How would it be so easy for him to get to the heaven-defying stage of level 20? After a few years, he would not even be fit to carry Fang Xingjian’s shoes.”

“I don’t believe it.” Li`er, who had been pampered since young, had a princess syndrome. Acting up, she shouted loudly, “Brother Hylong is the best! What Windstorm Sword Hero? Brother Hylong will definitely teach him a lesson during the Regional Selection. He’ll pass the Regional Selection, become a Conferred Knight and propose to me!”

The white-bearded old man was fuming so much that his beard was flying. “Look at how spoiled you’ve made your daughter.”

...

The School of Sword Arts. Ogden walked in, wearing City Guard’s armor. He greeted the students he passed by. He enjoyed the respectful and admiring gazes from the rest in The School of Sword Arts.

However, after failing the Prefectural Selection, his family was no longer able to pay for his day-to-day expenses and school fees, and could only make him get a job. Thank goodness that he had still entered the top one hundred spots in the Prefectural Selection, and had been able to get a job in the City Guards Institution.

If he continued to work hard like Jack, putting in effort every year, he would probably be able to pass the Prefectural Selection seven to eight years later.

Of course, if he did not devote enough hard work to his training, but was instead tied down by all the material and worldly possessions, he would be stuck at level 9 without going through

any transition at all, for all of his life.

Hearing that the students in the courtyard were still lavishing praises on Fang Xingjian's achievements in the Prefectural Selection, he could not help but shake his head and say, "Your news are all outdated. Fang Xingjian is useless now."

"Useless? How can that be?" A student who was over ten years old shouted, "Martial Brother Xingjian is the Prefectural Selection Champion, the one who placed first this year!"

"That's right. He's the Prefectural Champion. How could he be useless?"

"We want to be like him in the future. Master the basic sword techniques, participate in the Prefectural Selection, and clinch the Prefectural Champion title. "

Ogden beamed and said, "You guys are still too young. So what if he won the Prefectural Champion title? Let me tell you. The aristocrats' accumulated resources for hundreds and thousands of years are beyond your imaginations.

"Do you know that the Prefectural Selection is only the starting point? The transition after the Prefectural Selection is the real gauge of one's future.

"Tresia Clan's Kaunitz completed the first transition in just ten days. That Fang Xingjian prepared for three months but still failed the transition.

"This is the gap between us and those with background, who have constant support from their clans.

"Rather than staying here, doing sword practice everyday, you might as well follow me to run errands for Young Master Kaunitz. If he were to reward you with some meat from ferocious beasts or with medicinal ointments which aid the body's training, it would make up for over ten days of your hard work here."

[1] The girl's name is Li. People who are of closer relationship will

generally add “`er” after a person’s name to express intimacy. Elders may also do the same for someone younger than them, whom they are close with.

Chapter 66 Killing Techniques

Just as Ogden finished his words, Second Martial Brother Lambert frowned and said, “Ogden, do you really like gossiping so much? Even if Fang Xingjian did fail his job transition, he would still be much stronger than you.”

“Hehe, that’s hard to say. He has failed his job transition and would be a useless bum in the future. If I were to participate in the Prefectural Selection a few years later and complete the job transition after enrolling in the academy, I might be able to surpass him then.”

At that moment, The School of Sword Arts’ Headmaster Kyle walked in. Upon seeing Ogden, he frowned, saying, “Since you are no longer a student with The School of Sword Arts, you should stop wandering about around here.

“And...” Without giving Ogden a chance to reply, Kyle continued criticizing Ogden, “And, Fang Xingjian has already transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero and has already knocked out Kaunitz in the arena.”

He looked at Ogden with a gaze of pity, saying, “I advise you to speak less ill of him in the future.”

Saying that, he turned around and walked to his room, thinking, ‘I didn’t expect Fang Xingjian’s talent to be so much greater than what I had expected. Windstorm Sword Hero... Although it’s late to do so now, I’ll still need to go have a chat with him. Even headquarters would be wishing to lay their hands on a Windstorm Sword Hero.’

Thinking about this, he opened a secret box in his room, and an expression of determination appeared on his face.

...

Fang Xingjian was led by Huang Lin to the deeper areas within

the academy. While they were walking, Huang Lin said with blazing eyes, “Now that you’ve become a Windstorm Sword Hero, you have the strongest foundation. What you need to do from now on is to secure this foundation even more, so that it becomes impenetrable, and then you can dash up into the skies.

“If your foundation is not strong enough, while it might be easy for you to reach level 19 or even level 29, you may never be able to reach the Divine level.

“Xingjian, do you know? Your goal should be the Divine level, the pinnacle. Never let your goal remain on the second transition.

“From now on, you can keep the time every night for your own revision, in order to build up your attributes.

“During the day, I’ll give you guidance on Killing techniques and specialties. In the afternoon, the academy will go all out to prepare medicinal food and ferocious beasts for you. These are different from what you usually eat. You’ll need to put in all your effort into absorbing them with the help of your Waves.

“And from now on, you are forbidden from killing or defeating any more monsters or enemies. You need to focus all of your potential into raising your attributes. Only when your attributes are raised to the limit, can you level up by killing monsters and attain job progression. This way, your attributes will at least be two times that of other Knights at the same level as you.

“Normal Knights do not have to do this since their talents are limited, and their job progressions are limited. They may only be able to raise their attribute by 1 point after every few months and if they do not level up, it would only be a waste of time. The best way for them would be to level up quickly and to acquire progression in their jobs.

“But it is different for you. Xingjian, you cannot level up. Your talent allows you to attain even more potential and cultivate your attributes to greater heights. You can train for one, two or even

three years before you start to level up. This way, the potential you exhaust and the time you take to progress will be reduced by multiple times.

“Remember this. From now onwards, you are not allowed to kill or hurt any enemies.”

Fang Xingjian understood this logic. For example, with his over 70 points of agility, each additional point of increment would require 70,000 potential points. If he were to directly level up now, for example, to raise his level by 3, and achieve a breakthrough to 100 agility points, then each additional agility would require 100,000 potential points. He might as well increase his attributes through the option which would only require 70,000 points and then, when he reached a bottleneck, he could then level and power up by achieving his job progression.

Therefore, he nodded and said, “Yes.”

“Alright, let me tell you about the battles between Warriors who are at least at Knight levels or higher.

“Nurturing techniques nurtures the body and accumulates potential; Training techniques train one’s attributes; Amassing technique communicates with ether particles to change one’s intrinsic qualities. Lastly, Killing techniques are the chief constituents for killing in battles.

“Every Warrior should be equipped with Reduced Force Field after they have completed the job transition. It is a very useful thing, no matter for probing, killing enemies, or daily activities.

“Even if it’s just an ordinary Knight encompassing himself with a Reduced Force Field, paired up with the Knight attire, they would be almost invincible to ordinary people.

“However, the Reduced Force Field would, at best, only display half of a Knight’s powers. Therefore, while you can use this trick against people who are weaker than you, when you encounter

those who are close to you in terms of abilities, and when the other party is also encompassed by Reduced Force Field, your only reliance would be to fully display your physical prowess.

“Therefore, other than those fellows who practice bow and arrow, close combat is the deciding means between the majority of the Knights.”

Fang Xingjian nodded to indicate that he understood. For the battles after the first transition, if it was against those who were weaker, one could just rely on the Reduced Forced Field and crush them. Take for example if he were to be against Zhou Yong or Carter, within a ten meter circumference, he would be able to knock them out simply by swiping his hand across the air.

However, if his opponent was one whose abilities was close to his, or even above his, he would still need to rely on his physical body eventually, dashing up for a close combat with direct confrontation.

Huang Lin continued, “And Killing techniques are means used to eliminate Knights, Conferred Knights, or even those National Knights. They allow you to make use of everything you can make use of, displaying extraordinary strength and true prowess, raising your battle prowess by ten or even a hundred times.

“Each set of Killing technique is something which can take a person his whole life to study and train.

“Just like how the Desolate Thunderfire Sword performed by that old hag Rebecca is Tresia Clan’s Killing technique passed down to their internal disciples.”

Saying this, Huang Lin let out a cold laugh and said, “However, while it is fine for a swordsman to primarily use such a far distance Killing technique on someone weaker than themselves, it’s basically useless to battle against enemies who are of similar standards.

“That old hag is too cowardly and only dares to rely on her seniority and level of cultivation to bully those more junior than her. That’s why she chose such a lousy Killing technique.

“Xingjian, let me tell you. In a while, after you enter the secret treasury to choose the Killing Technique, there’s the Supreme Mistwind Sword Killing technique. This Killing technique controls dynamic wind and is the most brilliant secret art where one can move so fast that others will not be able to see a thing. It is highly compatible with your job, Windstorm Sword Hero.

“Next would be Demonic Dusk and Eternal Divine Sword. You can also take a look at them as well. Hehe, these are the best Killing techniques in the academy. Originally, to learn them, one would need to be put through several trials, but it won’t be necessary for you to do so.

“The other Killing techniques are all either sword art techniques or are not compatible with your job.”

Just as Huang Lin was speaking with Fang Xingjian, they had already passed through a long underground tunnel and had reached a gigantic metallic door. The two guards in heavy armor with their faces hidden, stopped Huang Lin.

These two guards looked spiritless, as if they were not alive but were some thousand-year old zombie like creatures.

Fang Xingjian sensed an extremely dangerous aura from them.

It was obvious that the two of them were sent by the academy to guard the secret treasury.

“Only one may enter.” One of the guards spoke to Huang Lin.

The other one went up to Fang Xingjian and said, “And... You can only borrow one each time. You are not allowed to copy them or lend them to someone else. Return them within ten days, if not, you’ll be charged with treason.”

Huang Lin nodded at Fang Xingjian and said, “Go on, I’ll wait for

you outside.”

Therefore, Fang Xingjian entered the secret treasury, accompanied by one of the guards.

The secret treasury was very empty and was sealed so it was very stuffy. There was a rotting smell in the air, and only twenty-six stone pillars were supporting the structure, each of them with a book made of some metallic material which was neither silver nor gold. What was recorded in the books were Kirs Royal Academy's best twenty-six secret Killing techniques.

All the secret Killing techniques here were not something that techniques obtained from the library or imparted by the instructors could compare against. They were not just hard to cultivate, with a high level of difficulty, but even ordinary students who wished to have access to them would need to pass through several trials.

However, as Huang Lin's disciple, Fang Xingjian did not meet such obstacles.

Fang Xingjian looked across each of the stone pillars, each of them inscribed with the name of the secret Killing technique. He slowly took a look around, browsed through the other three or four Killing Techniques, before heading to the Supreme Mistwind Sword and had a thorough look.

From the beginning to the end, he stood right before the guard's view, reading through the secret manuals. The guard did not say a word. It was obvious that so long as Fang Xingjian did not break the rules, he would not be bothered with what he was doing.

Fang Xingjian looked at the Supreme Mistwind Sword manual. Although he had yet to comprehend all of it, his gaze had already shown that he was shaken up.

He had initially not really understood why Killing techniques were actual techniques used for killing since, to him, Nurturing

techniques and Training techniques could also be used for battles and for killing.

However, only after taking a closer look at the Supreme Mistwind Sword, and seeing how it was an integration of all means and ways to control the atmosphere and strong gales, pushing one's energy from one's flesh and blood to eradicate enemies, did Fang Xingjian then realized the differences.

The whole Supreme Mistwind Sword manual did not have a single mean of nurturing one's mind and body, nor improving one's physical body or mental state. It's only use was to kill enemies, even to the expense of harming one's own body, exhausting one's vitality and potential.

That is right. After taking a look at this set of sword technique, Fang Xingjian knew that if he were to use the Supreme Mistwind Sword too many times within a short timeframe, it might bring great damage to his own body.

However, there was still a satisfied smile on his face.

That was because, the killing prowess of the Supreme Mistwind Sword was great enough. It was also because it was a sword technique, a sword technique that Fang Xingjian loved to train in the most.

Fang Xingjian looked at the guard next to him and said, "It'll be this."

Chapter 67 Reaction

Tresia Knight Academy was an aristocratic school set up by the Tresia Clan, which Kaunitz belonged to.

The majority of the students were either Kirst's aristocrats, or sons and daughters of officials or rich merchants. Not only did they have to cultivate their martial techniques here, they also had to learn various etiquette, language, history and other subjects.

Here, one would be able to network, form connections and thus profit boundlessly in the future, for the rest of their lives.

And Vivian, who was under Kaunitz's care, had started learning in the Tresia Academy from about three months ago. It seemed that learning in this place was extremely suitable to her, and relying on her beauty as well as Kaunitz's support, with her resourcefulness, she had already become an extremely popular character in Tresia Academy.

Lightly fanning the golden silk fan in her hand, Vivian leaned against the banister, smiling slightly as she looked at the hardworking guys who were practicing relentlessly in the training grounds.

Beside her stood a blonde female who grabbed onto her, saying, "Vivian, you are so beautiful. Look at that Laurea who just recently transferred here. He's the son of an extremely rich merchant; and that Willis, he's the youngest son of Kirst's Finance Minister; and Wei Duo, his brother was the Prefectural Champion five years ago, his eyes are set on the Regional Selection next year.

"They are all mesmerised by you, hehe, who are you going to choose?"

Hearing the names of the three students, Vivian disdainfully laughed, "Those three fellows are all extravagant and indulge in debauchery, merely fond of flaunting their bravery and fighting,

what prospects would they have in the future? But Wei Duo's elder brother, being the Prefectural Champion five years ago, still could be considered somewhat qualified, but..."

The girl laughed, "I know, all of them can't compare to Kaunitz. Kaunitz is Tresia's direct descendent, the future successor to be the clan head.

"I heard that he only took ten days to succeed in his first transition, and only three months to bring his Waves to level 3. Even the clan head praised him, saying that he is Tresia's strongest genius in a hundred years.

"Even that Prefectural Champion, Fang Xingjian, wasn't his match."

Vivian laughed complacently, before she tried to appear a bit more reserved as she spoke, "Kaunitz is not bad, but I'll still have to wait for him to pass the Regional Selection before I will agree to his request."

A few other aristocrat ladies appeared, chattering with Vivian. With Kaunitz's power and influence to support her, Vivian soon had the group of girls eating out of her hands.

Although, there were even a few aristocrat ladies who were displeased, they did not dare to show it on their faces.

And at that moment, a little eight to nine years old girl with two braids ran over with a pale countenance, "This is bad, this is bad..."

Vivian smiled, shaking her head, "What's wrong little Connie? Don't be so panicky, have you forgotten all the etiquette that our teacher taught us?"

The little girl named Connie panted, her little face squinched together, filled with anxiety as she spoke, "Kaunitz. Kaunitz just got heavily injured and was brought back by Madam Rebecca. He is currently undergoing medical treatment."

“What?!” Vivian abruptly stood out, frowning, “How is this possible? How could Kaunitz possibly be heavily injured when he’s in the Royal Knight Academy? What happened? Connie, slow down and explain clearly.”

“On the arena. Someone fought with Kaunitz on the arena, dealing him heavy injuries.”

“Arena?” Vivian was puzzled, “Why was there a duel again? His duel with Fang Xingjian was supposed to be today, but since Fang Xingjian has failed his transition, there’s no way that he would be able to turn up for the duel. If that’s the case, who was it that injured Kaunitz...?”

“Fang Xingjian, yes!!” Connie exclaimed. “It’s that Fang Xingjian!” Connie tried to recall the facts as she said, “I heard that Fang Xingjian has succeeded in his transition, and transitioned into that, that...that Sword Hero thingy.”

In the crowd, someone’s eyes lit up, “Windstorm Sword Hero?”

“Yes yes yes,” Connie nodded non-stop. “They said that that Fang Xingjian successfully transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, and easily defeated Kaunitz in just a few moves.”

Vivian’s eyes unceasingly narrowed, her face contorted heavily, as she spoke out in a low voice, “Wind...storm... Sword... Hero..?”

The aristocrat ladies who had been slightly displeased with Vivian exchanged glances, laughter flashing in their eyes.

“It’s actually a Windstorm Sword Hero? I heard that in the entire history of our Empire, there were only three people who successfully became Windstorm Sword Heroes.”

“Indeed, and I also heard that all three of them became Divine level experts in the end.”

“Aiya, would this Fang Xingjian also become a Divine level expert in the future?”

A young lady laughed as she turned her gaze to Vivian, acting innocent as she asked, “Vivian, I heard that this Fang Xingjian came from The School of Sword Arts. Are you acquainted with him? Such a character... Why didn’t you introduce him to us?”

Vivian’s countenance underwent a slight change as she ruthlessly glared at the person who had just spoken, gritting her teeth as she ran outside, saying, “I’ll go see how Kaunitz is doing.”

As she stepped out, her mind was flooded with the news that Fang Xingjian had successfully transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, while her heart was filled with traces of regret.

...

At the same time, within a secret chamber of the Tresia Clan.

Rebecca’s face was completely flushed red, as she angrily howled at Tresia Clan’s clan head, Kaunitz’s father, “Fang Xingjian that little bastard! We must not allow him to grow any stronger. That fellow actually dared to fight against me, and is now a Windstorm Sword Hero. If we allow him to get any stronger, there will no longer be a place for our Tresia Clan in the future.”

The clan head had a cold and indifferent expression on his face as he spoke, “So is that why you raised your hands against him? And even clashed with Huang Lin?”

Seeing the cold and indifferent expression on her second brother’s face, the wrinkles on Rebecca’s face cringed together as she shrieked, “He is your son! Your biological son! Do you expect me to do nothing and just watch while he’s being bullied? When has our Tresia Clan ever suffered such humiliation?

“Fang Xingjian that little bastard, I must definitely kill him, as well as that Huang Lin who doesn’t know how to show respect to his seniors. Second brother, we must write to big brother, he’s currently in the Imperial Capital...”

The crisp sound of a slap rang out.

Rebecca stared at the clan head in disbelief. It was as if she could not believe that he would actually hit her.

“You old fool!” Tresia Clan’s clan head raged. “I asked you to go to the Royal Academy to be a teacher in order to meet other Knights, showing them good will and building up connections so that we could expand our Tresia Clan’s prestige, boosting our support for big brother. I didn’t ask you to go there to arouse hatred and make grudges!

“Do you know who Huang Lin is?! He was the ‘Slaughter God’ of the western army back then! Do you know how many in the Western Army are his ‘life-and-death’ buddies [1], and how many of those from the older generation in the Imperial Capital place him in high regards?!”

“And Fang Xingjian, he’s only sixteen yet he has transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero. Do you know how monstrous his talent is?! It’s fine if you don’t befriend him, but to think that you went all out to against him. You... you... you... What can I say about you?!”

“You are a failure in both martial arts and studies.

“From now onwards, you are to stay at home and not allowed to leave the residence. You don’t have to go back to the academy either, I will request leave of absence on your behalf.”

After speaking, the clan head flicked his sleeves as he left, leaving Rebecca standing there blankly, gingerly touching the red hand print left on her face.

The next instant, bitter resentment frenziedly flashed in her eyes, “Alright, alright, alright. Since all of you are looking down on me, I’ll settle this myself.

“Do you all think that you are the only ones with friends? Little bastard, so what if you are a Windstorm Sword Hero? A dead Windstorm Sword Hero is no more than a dead man.”

[1] Buddies so close that they do not mind putting their lives on the line for each other.

Chapter 68 Wind Disaster

Speed is power.

This was the first sentence written on the first page of Supreme Mistwind Sword.

Supreme Mistwind Sword was a Killing technique which pursued extreme speed.

He ruffled the air with sword arts, creating sword Qis, and stacking the sword Qis one on top of the other to increase his own speed. It was a technique which created and controlled sword Qis. He need great strength, agility, reaction, and control to perform it.

The faster he waved his sword, the stronger the the sword Qi's prowess. The sword Qi increased the practitioner's support, raising his speed.

“The Killing technique Supreme Mistwind Sword is extremely profound, and it's based on using an omnipresent atmosphere to increase one's sword technique's agility and damage.”

Huang Lin looked at Supreme Mistwind Sword's content and said, “Xingjian, your sword talent is unparalleled and I have not learnt the Killing technique Supreme Mistwind Sword either. Therefore, I can only give you pointers purely based on sword arts principles. In the end you'll still need to rely on yourself.”

As he said that, Huang Lin smiled. “But I believe that even if you train by yourself, you'll still be able to reach great heights in this Killing technique.”

From there, Fang Xingjian began the days with practicing the Supreme Mistwind Sword.

Waking up early in the morning, he would create sword Qi at full power one thousand times. Even from a distance of hundreds of meters away from Fang Xingjian's villa, one would still be able to see the gigantic sword Qis flying out over ten meters before they

slowly vanished.

Each time Fang Xingjian waved his sword to slit across the air, and with the quick acceleration of the sword's edge, he created shockwaves in the air, forming streams of sword Qis.

All these streams of sword Qis slashed through the atmosphere, spurring the air currents to move, and changing the air pressure. Some of them were unusually strong and violent, while others were soft and gentle. And at the end, Fang Xingjian could even create unbelievable sword Qis such as whirlwinds, twisters and air pillars.

All these were various mysterious phenomena in the Supreme Mistwind Sword, created by slashing through the air and disturbing the atmosphere. Also, they were created by pure sword Qis, which allowed Fang Xingjian to conveniently rely on his unparalleled talent in order to continuously master them at an incredible speed.

One thousand sword Qis took him one hour, and Fang Xingjian also fully depleted all his energy during this one hour. He was aching horribly all over, and even his organs felt a bit unwell.

This was caused by the way Killing techniques stressed the physical body, making small vessels or even the heart suffer from hidden injuries. Without high attributes like Fang Xingjian's it was impossible to perform such Killing techniques. Therefore, the academy would not give students access to learn such Killing techniques. It would be as good as murdering them.

Killing techniques did not increase one's attributes nor did they provide one with specialties. They had no strengthening effect on the foundations of one's physical body, and their only use was to kill. This was also why Fang Xingjian only learnt the Supreme Mistwind Sword. Rather than diverting his energy, he might as well focus on leveling up the Killing technique which was the most suitable for him.

After all, he really did not have much time left.

After that, he started his breakfast. Countless members of the academy's upper echelon brought him ferocious beasts, aged medicinal plants unearthed from deep in the mountains, and of course, the ten Wind Hawks that the Headmaster had grabbed from Kirst's City Lord's residence.

These Wind Hawks were reared in the academy and fed with the best medicinal plants every day.

After being killed, they had then been placed into a big pot, and stewed for over six hours with countless herbs and animal essences.

Fang Xingjian would take a big bowl of Wind Hawk soup and its meat every morning. It tasted extremely fresh, melting in his mouth. The silk like texture, combined with a deep fragrance, continuously lingered on his taste buds.

Of course, the delicious taste was just one of its perks. The most important thing was that these Wind Hawks were even too nourishing. The Headmaster reckoned that after Fang Xingjian finished these ten Wind Hawks, he should be able to get a 1 or 2 point increment to his agility attribute, and could even obtain the recovery of his physical energy and getting rid of hidden injuries.

After breakfast, two Knight instructors would massage Fang Xingjian's muscles and veins all over his body with the Reduced Force Field, helping him move his vital energy and blood, eliminating his fatigue, and healing the damage his body had got from previously practicing the Killing technique, after which he continued with his training yet again.

This was a treatment that even the Headmaster himself had not had the chance to enjoy, and which was making countless people go crazy with envy.

On the training grounds, Fang Xingjian flashed as he moved

about at great speed, slashing downwards with the sword again and again. With each slash the air would be torn apart, activating the circulation of the air currents, and creating various types of sword Qis. However, these sword Qis were unlike the ones in the morning training. They would curve, extend outwards, and leap about, as if chasing after and encircling Fang Xingjian's body, just like a gust of raging wind revolving around him.

They did not merely increase Fang Xingjian's agility, but had also encompassed a terrifying destructive force. As each of the sword Qis swept across the ground, they would leave sword marks a few inches deep on the marble stones.

Next was the medicinal food and the ferocious beasts' essence, which would compensate for the depletion of his vital energy and blood, as well as for the strain on his organs.

These were then followed by simulations of actual battles. Sometimes, it would be other Knight students, sometimes it would be instructors, and other times it would be Huang Lin.

Strong gales were blowing on the vast training grounds, circling around Fang Xingjian and hiding his figure within the raging winds, at the same time revolving around Huang Lin and making his figure look as if it was flashing in and out of existence.

Huang Lin held onto the black metal longsword, not moving. Each time he attacked, Fang Xingjian, who was flashing around him, was viciously sent flying.

However, with the specialty 'Single Sword World Subjugation' and the Supreme Mistwind Sword, Fang Xingjian's speed was too fast. It was as if he had turned into tens of human figures in but a moment, continuously riding on the raging winds, and flashing around Huang Lin again and again.

Boom boom boom boom boom!

Each time Fang Xingjian appeared, the two swords would clash,

making an extremely loud sound. Fang Xingjian would then disappear in an instant, moving with the raging wind to appear behind Huang Lin, attacking again with a sword accompanied by layers of whirlwinds.

With a loud clank, Huang Lin managed to fend off the attack. The longsword in Fang Xingjian's hand bent into a curve under the pressure from two immense forces, and then it disappeared once again in the raging winds, together with Fang Xingjian.

Clankclankclankclankclankclankclank, a series of sounds of colliding metals continuously rang out, and fire sparks flashed amidst the raging winds. It was the result of two longswords colliding continuously at high speed.

In the process of performing sword arts, Fang Xingjian only felt that all his muscles and bones suffered an increasingly immense pressure, from the powers he himself was exerting, along with the atmosphere's pressure from the high speed movements.

His Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves circulated fanatically, relieving him of his fatigue, and increasing the toughness of each inch of his skin.

His Ice Age Meditation Art circulated at great speed, requiring him to continuously analyze each stream's movement, each of his muscles' and bones' every little movement, as he performed the Supreme Mistwind Sword to its limits.

Killing techniques did not merely kill enemies. They also brought damage to one's body, just like when boxers punched sandbags, or how sports involving running would hurt the knees, and how lifting weights could hurt one's spine.

Killing techniques drove the practitioner's body, Waves, and mental cultivation technique to the limits with the scope of inflicting harm on the opponent. At the same time, it was also a huge burden on the practitioner's body itself.

Human figures crossed repeatedly, and finally, with a light holler from Huang Lin, Reduced Force Field exploded out, dissipating all the raging winds in the surroundings.

Fang Xingjian slowly gasped for breath, and stopped the attack. In his hand, the longsword he had used for the day's practice was once again split into two. Ordinary weapons were no longer able to withstand the pressure of his powers.

Huang Lin's eyes shone as he looked at Fang Xingjian and said, "Xingjian, your talent is really..." He shook his head, saying "It's as if you've been training for decades."

"The sword Qis and sword winds from each of your slashes made your speed increase faster and faster, and they have increased your movement and attack speed by two times. If you were to perfect the Supreme Mistwind Sword to the maximum level, given sufficient time, your attack speed would probably be above mine..."

"This cannot do." Fang Xingjian shook his head. "My control is still insufficient. As long as I continue to execute the Supreme Mistwind Sword, I will be able to increase my speed with sword Qis so much so that I'm not able to react in time, I'm unable to control it, or my attributes won't permit me to keep up."

"The best I can do now is to keep it at a speed about two times faster than my usual speed. This is a far cry from my body's limits, but it's because of my inadequacy in mastering this sword technique."

Huang Lin touched his chin and said, "Your sword talent is outstanding, but your understanding of the wind is limited. You can start working from there."

"Mmm." Fang Xingjian nodded. "The faster my speed, the greater the prowess of the Supreme Mistwind Sword's sword Qis. The greater the sword Qis' prowess, the greater the support it gives me, and the faster my speed will be, the stronger my sword Qis will

be.”

This was a sword technique which pursued speed, at the same time allowing one to get increasingly stronger the more one used it.

“Physical strength, control, strength, agility... There are still many areas I need to improve.”

Chapter 69 Attempt and Middleman

Looking at Fang Xingjian's appearance, Huang Lin shook his head, saying, "Xingjian, are you being too anxious? Your achievements now are already something that many people would never reach in their entire lives!"

"You are still young, there's no need to be in such a hurry. Sometimes, when we rush things, they will only result in failure."

"Settle down, take it slow. After strengthening your foundations, you will be able to reach even greater heights in the future."

Hearing the other party's words, Fang Xingjian knew very well that this was the right way to go about it. However, he really did not have any time left. He opened his mouth, but no words came out.

Huang Lin gave him a weird look and said, "Xingjian... Do you have something on your mind?"

Thinking about how he had only five years of lifespan left, at that moment Fang Xingjian suddenly felt a burning desire. The needed to gain sufficient strength in these five years, he wanted to look for Caroline for revenge, he wanted to return to Fang Clan in Demonic City and question Li Shuanghua on how his mother had died.

But the next moment, the Ice Age Meditation Art automatically started to circulate as calm and rationale once again took over most of his consciousness. He gradually exhaled, shook his head and said, "It's nothing. Teacher, I'd like to take a break alone."

Huang Lin nodded, "Have a rest. You've already completed this morning's training. Later, after lunch, prepare yourself. From the afternoon onwards, you'll need to bathe in secret medicinal liquid. This is good stuff, the Headmaster prepared it for you himself. With the academy's financial ability, we can only keep this up for a month."

Having said these, he headed for the door as he continued, “Another thing. Xingjian, I’m your Master. If you have any worries or troubles, you can look for me anytime.”

It was a pity that Fang Xingjian’s mind was already fully taken over by calm and rationale. It was impossible for him to risk revealing his secret. He merely nodded and said, “Don’t worry, teacher, I’m fine.”

After Huang Lin left, Fang Xingjian took a short break, then inspected his Techniques Column.

‘Supreme Mistwind Sword. The faster the speed, the stronger the sword Qi; and the stronger the sword Qi, the faster the speed.

‘Windshadow Sword Divinity has already given me extreme speed, and I’ve also got Boundaries Negation. As long as I perform this technique, my speed can increase even further.

‘Then...’

As he said this, he headed towards the weapon rack at the side, switching his weapon for a brand new longsword.

Ever since learning the Boundaries Negation technique, Fang Xingjian had gradually accumulated 30,000 potential points, which would allow him to display Boundaries Negation for over thirty seconds.

The next moment, Fang Xingjian activated his Boundaries Negation technique. In the blink of an eye, he felt a restless throbbing energy everywhere in the air. It was the power of the ether particles, charging into his body like a boiling torrent. At the same time, the blood and vital energy in his body also burst out crazily.

Each of his muscles and veins looked as if they were inflated as they swelled up, then unleashed an incredible contraction, thus making his speed increase tremendously.

Fang Xingjian took a light step forward. At that moment, he felt

as if the air in the surroundings had gained a water-like viscosity. It seemed to him that he needed to exert ten times more strength than before for this single step.

He knew that this was an illusion, and so he did not let himself be overly concerned over it. Therefore he moved. The Supreme Mistwind Sword responded to him, activating outwards, but unlike before, this time around, the Supreme Mistwind Sword's speed had reached an unbelievable stage.

The air turned into a viscous liquid, and with each step he took, Fang Xingjian felt as if the entire world was pressing on each square inch of his skin. The longsword in his hands flashed, and one would be unable to see the its shadow. With each slash, the raging sword Qi roared like an atmospheric dragon, charging out and making a deep lengthy trench in the ground.

Just before the sword Qi would have collided with the walls, Fang Xingjian, having already caught up with it in a step, dispersed it with a bang.

Scratch scratch scratch scratch. With a light wave, hundreds of sword Qis spread outwards, each of them equal to Kaunitz's slashes at full power.

Fang Xingjian's figure flashed about, once again dispersing each of them.

This move was already over two times faster than Fang Xingjian's usual speed, and had long surpassed the limits of his previous display of the Supreme Mistwind Sword.

The air currents in the training room were turbulent, shaking up the whole training room. Streams of atmospheric dragons were like tamed dogs, crawling around Fang Xingjian, continuously increasing his speed.

He only felt that the shadows in the surroundings were flashing about endlessly. His speed accelerate, getting faster and faster. The

longsword in his hand was also facing greater and greater pressure. He was slashing the air non-stop, while the Supreme Mistwind Sword surrounded the sword, increasing the weapon's speed. Each stream of vortexes surrounded it, as if it was the sword of the King of Wind, which controlled all the moving currents in the atmosphere.

The next moment, Fang Xingjian only felt as if a boom rang throughout his body, while an air of white currents encompassed the sword.

It was vapor cones, something which Fang Xingjian had seen before on supersonic aircrafts. Although the white clouds formed on the sword were very thin, they still showed how terrifying the longsword's action speed was.

The strong colliding waves surrounding the longsword were propelled outwards, accompanied by extremely strong kinetic energy, which could generate terrifying damage prowess.

At that moment, the naked eye would no longer be able to see Fang Xingjian, and one's hearing and sense of touch would no longer be able to sense his movements.

Fang Xingjian's figure was as if it had completely disappeared in the raging wind, leaving only a metallic longsword seemingly turned into a black line, performing the Supreme Mistwind Sword and dancing amidst the raging winds.

His body felt as if it could freely appear anywhere at extreme speed, as if Fang Xingjian had turned into the wind itself as he was waving his longsword. He only needed to consider the movements of the sword, thus allowing the prowess of the Supreme Mistwind Sword to reach an unbelievable stage.

With a bang, the longsword exploded and the raging winds suddenly came to a halt. Fang Xingjian's silhouette gradually appeared. He had sustained the vapor cones for only slightly over ten seconds before they completely disappeared.

Hundreds and thousands of sword Qis and collision waves accompanied the longsword's explosion, slicing in all directions. The surface of the training grounds was left with countless cracks.

‘When using the Boundaries Negation, my speed will suddenly increase by more than two times, reaching the limits of when I’m using the Supreme Mistwind Sword...

And I only need over ten seconds, with the aid of the Supreme Mistwind Sword’s sword Qis, to increase my speed by another two fold and achieve sonic speed in but a moment.

‘If my physical strength can get even stronger and I accumulate enough potential, letting my speed increase continuously...

Thinking of that prowess it could generate, Fang Xingjian was filled with a feeling of yearning and fascination. It was a pity that there were too many factors limiting the Supreme Mistwind Sword’s powers.

However, with a sufficiently strong weapon which could withstand strength and pressure, with sufficient physical strength to undergo high speed movements, and sufficient potential to display the skill Boundaries Negation even Fang Xingjian himself had no idea how fast he could be while using the Supreme Mistwind Sword to accelerate.

The speed of sound? Supersonic speed? Two times the speed of sound? Three times the speed of sound?

Fang Xingjian did not know. He only knew that as long as he had sufficient potential, he would not be afraid to face that old hag Rebecca, whose strength, agility and reaction all exceeded 100 points.

If he could sustain Supreme Mistwind Sword continually until he reached three times the speed of sound, then dealing with Rebecca would take nothing but one attack.

‘Potential. I must accumulate even more potential.

‘And the longsword. I don’t know when the Empire’s Divine Weapon will be completed. Normal metal swords are unable to withstand my strength and wind pressure.

‘However, after displaying Boundaries Negation, my powers increase by leaps and folds. This skill is not something the Windstorm Sword Hero is equipped with. Unless I’m left with no choice, it’s better that I don’t display it.

‘And each time I display it, I’ll need to deplete potential points. Considering that I’m unable to level up this skill as well, it’s better that I don’t use it.

‘And the Supreme Mistwind Sword... I wonder what surprises it will bring me after perfecting it to the maximum level, within one to two months.’

Just as Fang Xingjian was pondering, someone knocked on the doors.

“Lord Xingjian, Teacher Kyle from The School of Sword Arts asked to meet you. Are you free?”

“Kyle?” Fang Xingjian’s head askewed as he took a towel from the side to wipe off the sweat on his forehead. He said, “I’ll have my lunch now. Let him wait in the dining hall.”

In the personalised dining hall the Headmaster had specially prepared for Fang Xingjian, a big table full of dishes had been readied.

The main dish was a fish soup made from a gigantic carnivorous deep sea fish. Fang Xingjian took a taste, and his brows twitched. With just one mouth, he felt the strong fragrance exploding in his mouth. The taste was strong but not sickening, and had a light refreshing fragrance to it as well.

That fine and refreshing taste made him feel as if a fish was jumping in his mouth.

“This fish soup... is very delicious,” Fang Xingjian said.

The servant at the side introduced, “This is prepared by the chef specially invited by the Headmaster, created with special methods, and then stewed with raw scallions, egg yolk and pickled vegetables. It is specially prepared for my Lord.”

Once he finished the soup in big gulps, he felt vital energy and blood shooting around in his body. Looking at the potential points increasing on the Techniques Column, Fang Xingjian suddenly felt overjoyed.

And at that moment, a servant led Kyle in.

Fang Xingjian drank the fish soup in big gulps as he said, “Teacher Kyle, I’m short on time. If you don’t mind, I’ll talk to you while I have my meal.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine.” Kyle smiled, not minding at all. His eyes swept across the dishes on the table, and could not help but swallow.

‘All these are ferocious beasts and valuable medicinal herbs. Just this meal alone would make me bankrupt. The academy is really willing to spend money.’

“So, teacher, what matters do you have today?” Fang Xingjian picked up a big mouthful of medicinal herbs and ate it. With one mouthful, he could feel a cooling feeling spreading out from his mouth all the way to his stomach. His body grew cool and his potential suddenly surged to a 10 point increase.

Kyle gave it some thought and said, “Xingjian, what do you think about the relationship between the Empire and the various factions?”

Fang Xingjian said without any hesitation, “The Empire is the greatest and strongest faction, just like this table of food here. Normal factions may not even be able to provide this, daily, to an expert who completed the second transition, right? But I can enjoy six such meals on a daily basis.”

Kyle immediately smiled bitterly. He knew that Fang Xingjian had understood the reason he had come by today. He decided to not to cover it up, but to say it outright, “Xingjian, you were The School of Sword Arts’ student to begin with. It was just that I was unable to tell that your talent was so great that you would even be able to transition into a Windstorm Sword Hero.

“You must have understood, more or less, during this time. While the Empire is strong, no matter how talented an ordinary commoner is, he can only be an underling of the Royalty and the major aristocrats, and be under their command. You’ll no longer have any freedom.

“But if you were to join The School of Sword Arts, with your aptitude as a Windstorm Sword Hero, I can recommend you to be one of the contenders for the position of the school’s Headmaster.”

He took out a stack of books, saying, “This is the cultivation method for the first step of The School of Sword Arts’ greatest manual, Star Fate Sword.”

“As long as you are willing to join The School of Sword Arts, this is yours.”

Chapter 70 Reply

Fang Xingjian did not give an immediate reply to Kyle's words, but consecutively chugged down three big gulps, finishing the fragrant and fresh fish stew in one go. He inspected how his potential points had increased by over 50 points all at once, then wiped his mouth before giving his reply.

He threw a glance at the manual on the table, knowing full well that if he were to take a quick glance through it, he might be able to acquire the first stage of this Killing technique. However, he did not pick it up. Right now, the first stage of a Killing technique was no longer something he needed.

If he still had a few decades left to live, then it would be a good idea for him to get exposed to sword arts from various factions, extending his knowledge and being able to combine them together. However, to the Fang Xingjian, who was only left with four years and three months' time, the fastest way was to specialize in a particular style of sword arts and climb up to the pinnacle with it.

Therefore, he paused for a moment and said, "Teacher Kyle, the Empire is the greatest faction, and to be honest, all factions operate like a weaker version of the Empire. You said that I will not be able to get freedom in the Empire; but would it really be any different if I were to join The School of Sword Arts?"

"For this, I can guarantee..." Kyle wanted to continue, but was stopped by Fang Xingjian who had raised his hand.

"Teacher Kyle, the price to pay for the freedom that you had mentioned... is it to be in a destitute state, like you are now?" Fang Xingjian saw Kyle's expression change, but he did not stop. He emptied all the delicacies on the table and said at a very fast pace, "To gain something, it is natural to have to pay a price.

"Since I want access to other people's resources, other people's support, then it's only natural that I'd have to pay the price, by

giving up some of my freedom.

“The Empire is like this, but so is The School of Sword Arts. I don’t believe that The School of Sword Arts will invest their resources in me without any restraint, not asking for anything in return. Even if some people will not do so, there are so many members in the upper echelon... So many family members, kin, disciples... Would they agree to this?

“Talents won’t have true freedom no matter where they would go, even more so for geniuses. Even if I were to become the Headmaster of The School of Sword Arts, would there really be nothing that could restrain me?

“Therefore, this bargaining chip by the name of freedom doesn’t attract me at all. And in terms of resources, The School of Sword Arts could never compare with the Empire.”

Kyle furrowed his brows and said, “What you say may make sense, but you have never experienced how dark the tussles in the Empire’s higher echelon are. If you were to head there recklessly...”

“Teacher Kyle.” Fang Xingjian stopped eating, lifting his head, and looking at Kyle he said, “Trust me, I’ve seen too much darkness and devastation. But now, I have the confidence that I’ll be able to slash through them with my own sword now.”

Kyle looked at him calmly, and the two locked gazes for a while. Kyle let out a sigh and said, “Your heart is more determined than mine. You are more suitable for sword arts than I am.”

Fang Xingjian lowered his head and continued his lunch. His thoughts were freezing cold, but there were no problems with what he had said. He tried to imitate an ordinary man’s tone and said, “I’m thankful for your enlightenment in my sword training. If there’s anything you need my help for, as long as it’s within my abilities, I’ll do it.”

Kyle sighed, saying, “Next month, I’ll be participating in the Tournament of the Sword Heroes. No matter if I were to succeed or fail, I won’t be coming back.”

Fang Xingjian nodded, and Kyle continued, “What I’m most worried about is those students from the school. I’ve temporarily handed everything over to Lambert. If he faces any difficulties, I’ll need you to help look after them.”

Fang Xingjian calmly replied, “Don’t worry, I’ll do that.”

“Thank you.”

Kyle left, his eyes seemingly saying that he had understood something, but at the same time, disappointment shone stronger in his eyes.

Fang Xingjian did not know if Kyle could make it through the Tournament of the Sword Heroes. The only thing he could do was to take care of himself and allow himself to get stronger.

After finishing his meal, the servants led Fang Xingjian to a bedroom. Even before entering, he was hit by a strange fragrance. Fang Xingjian inhaled deeply, and felt a never before known sense of refreshness charging into all parts of his body. Even his mind seemed to be clearer.

Opening the door, the strange fragrance got even stronger. It came attacking into Fang Xingjian’s every cell, making him feel as if all the fatigue in his body had been completely wiped out.

The Headmaster and Huang Lin had long been standing there. They looked at the tub, which was the height of a human, a pitch-black medicinal liquid continuously warmed up inside it.

The Headmaster said, “Take off all your clothes and get in there.”

Fang Xingjian did not show the slightest hesitation as he took off his clothes and entered the tub.

“Circulate your Waves and mental cultivation method. Don’t

stop, and absorb as much of this medicinal properties as you can,” Huang Lin said.

Fang Xingjian had been circulating the Waves for twenty-four hours to begin with, so there was no problem with that at all. Each muscle in his body, each bone, were all moving at extreme speed. His emotions stayed clear as he maintained his calm and rationale.

Circulating the Waves, he felt as if the medicinal liquid was boiling, flaming auras crazily making their way into his body, as if they were burning away his organs, his vessels, and his nerves.

“Bear with it!” the Headmaster said. “These are grounded medicinal herbs with the Loulan Beast as the base.

We have matched various medicinal herbs to allow you to absorb the Loulan Beast’s essence and to change your body. You’ll gain a ferocious beast’s recovery abilities, endurance, and body toughness.”

Looking at Fang Xingjian’s pained expression and at the black auras dispersing on the surface of his body, the hint of a pained expression flashed across his face as well. “Even with the academy’s financial powers, we’ll only be able to provide such treatment for a month. During this month, you must soak in this medicinal liquid everyday. If you’re lucky, it’ll not only raise your endurance attribute, but also give you the specialty ‘Berserkness’.

Do your best to absorb everything. Don’t waste even a tiny bit of it.”

Fang Xingjian nodded, his breath and blood flow continuing to circulate as per the Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves. He could feel increasingly scorching energies drilling into his body, as if they were going to melt and dissolve every piece of his flesh.

The Headmaster looked at Fang Xingjian’s expression, and although his heart ached to bring out such medicinal liquid, bright light shone in his eyes.

‘Good, good, good. I’ve spent so much effort to reduce the academy’s expenditure for the following three years just so that Fang Xingjian could produce results.

‘As long as he can win first place in the Regional Selection, or even become a Divine level expert in the future, all these will be worth it.’

Regional Champion, National Champion, and a Divine Level expert from KIRST Royal Academy. Just the mere thought of it made the Headmaster feel extremely excited.

‘Absorb it, absorb it all! Even if it means heaping it all, I must heap it all to you so that you will become a Regional Champion!’

Just like that, Fang Xingjian would go through training for his sword techniques, Waves, and Killing techniques, as well as consume various medicinal foods and ferocious beasts’ essences. The Headmaster was investing an immense amount of resources on him, something which he had never done before.

On the other hand, Huang Lin sparred daily with Fang Xingjian, imparting him his understanding in the sword arts, as well as his experience in using them.

Regardless of whether it was attributes, specialties or techniques, Fang Xingjian progressed at an unbelievable speed, one which had never before been seen. He became stronger and stronger.

Of course, during this whole process, Huang Lin and the Headmaster dutifully guarded and protected Fang Xingjian, preventing him from being bothered in the least. They also did not allow him to kill any monsters in order to prevent him from leveling up too soon, gaining job progression but wasting his potential.

...

One month later, just as Fang Xingjian had made tremendous progress.

On a mountain slope on the Empire's west coast, a long-haired man wearing Knight's attire was looking towards a small city thousands of miles away.

Suddenly, he turned his head and looked towards the adjutant, saying, "What did you say? Windstorm Sword Hero?"

"That's right." An adjutant similarly dressed in a Knight's attire confirmed, "Based on reliable sources, Fang Xingjian has successfully transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero."

Chapter 71 Remarkable Achievement

“Windstorm Sword Hero? This first transition job... I don’t think there’s many people with this job in the entire history of the Empire, right?”

“Yes, in the entire history of the Empire, there are only three... Moreover...

“After their generations, no one else succeeded until now.”

After hearing his subordinate’s report, a gleam flickered in the long-haired guy’s eyes as he faintly said, “Who would have thought that a sapling casually sowed would actually have the opportunity to mature into a towering giant tree... How interesting!”

His subordinate’s countenance wavered as he inquired, “Sir, do we need to ask the Second Highness...”

“No need to do that for now. We’ll let the other clans test him out first.” Saying that, the long haired guy took out a cylinder-shaped object the length of an arm and placed it in front of his eyes. Squinting, he said, “This thing is quite interesting. Things a few hundred meters away appear to be merely a few metres away.

His subordinate explained, “This thing is known as a telescope. I heard that the Second Highness had gotten his hands on it when he was studying abroad. His Majesty has already laid out an order to mass manufacture this, attempting to ensure one for every Knight.”

Nodding, the long haired guy smiled and said, “The prey has entered the cave. Let’s move out.”

During the time that he spoke, a light breeze blew, making the blood-red cape that the long-haired guy was wearing flutter in the wind, resembling a combusting blood-colored flame.

It was the specialized equipment for the Empire’s Conferred Knight, which represented the power level of one who had

completed the second transition, as well as the glory of a Conferred Knight chosen from the multitudes of normal knights. This Scarlet Cape was specially manufactured by the Empire's Weaponry.

At the same time, at the command given by the long haired guy, hundreds of silhouettes suddenly shot out, akin to arrows fired in the direction of the small town.

A bloodthirsty smile curled the lips of the long-haired guy as he ordered, "Let's go. Slaughter them all."

...

In the Royal Academy, Fang Xingjian had been going through a month of cultivation, spending tremendous effort everyday in his training in all aspects, including sword techniques, Waves, and his mental cultivation method. During all this time, he had also continuously consumed ferocious beasts, heavenly ingredients and earthly treasures. Due to all these, along with the fact that such a top expert like Huang Lin had been sparring with him and giving him pointers, his skills had improved at an inconceivable rate.

And because his Waves had been circulating relentlessly for twenty-four hours a day, his experience points had been shooting up constantly. Although his talent in Waves was insufficient, and despite the fact that he required a large amount of experiences to break through each level, a month's time had allowed his Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves to rise to level 3, bringing him an increase of 3 points in strength, 6 points in agility, 3 points in reaction, 3 points in endurance, and 3 points in flexibility.

Other than this, he had also been constantly practicing his sword techniques, for twenty-four hours daily, making it possible for him to maniacally squeeze out every single potential point, and tempering his attributes.

As for the Ice Age Meditation Art, having previously used Kaunitz to sweep away all the distraction and injustice in his heart, and adding to that his month of grinding, the technique had also risen

to level 2, causing his thinking and planning abilities to progress yet again.

As for the killing technique, Supreme Mistwind Sword, because it involved Waves, the mental cultivation method, ether particles, and the currents' flow in the atmosphere, the technique was indeed many times more complex and profound than the sword techniques Fang Xingjian had cultivated before.

And thus, after a month of practice, he had only managed to train that sword technique to level 18 instead of reaching the maximum level.

Obviously, because techniques of the Killing Path did not benefit one's body, he did not gain increases for his attributes, despite reaching level 18. However, the level 18 Supreme Mistwind Sword, with its exquisite control on the body and air currents, had already granted Fang Xingjian the ability to increase his speed by more than three times.

However, although there had been no additional increases to his attributes, the level 10 Supreme Mistwind Sword still allowed Fang Xingjian to have more delicate control over the airflow, such that whenever his long sword slashed through the air, the sword itself would generate a high speed current akin to a sword light of about a few feet long, with which he could slash through gold and jade as though they were ordinary materials.

Fang Xingjian slowly stood up in the tub of medicinal liquid. That initially black as ink liquid had now become almost colorless. He could feel that the physical strength in his entire body had been enhanced to an incredible degree, as wisps and wisps of hot vital energy circulated throughout his body, seemingly about to explode at any moment.

Under the aid of the medicinal liquid, his body had become even stronger. Much energy and many nutrients had been amassed in various parts of his body, waiting for the right moment to erupt

whenever they would be needed.

This made Fang Xingjian feel as though he had an inexhaustible amount of energy.

Fang Xingjian stretched his hand out, and a servant at the side handed him a dagger. He lightly slit across his finger, making a wound, but just as a droplet of fresh blood dripped out, Fang Xingjian slightly clenched his finger's muscle, and the wound closed up, forming a scab a few minutes later.

Not only was his power soaring at a crazy speed, and his attributes increasing at an explosive pace, but having continuously soaked in medicinal liquid every afternoon for an entire month and causing the Headmaster to bawl his eyes out at the expenses, Fang Xingjian had finally obtained the 'Elementary Berserkness' speciality. Elementary Berserkness: allows one's recovery rate to far surpass that of ordinary humans'; normal cuts from swords and blades form scabs and both bruises and injuries heal almost instantly, allowing the practitioner to fully recover within a maximum of three hours.

Currently, , he could completely disregard common external injuries with his control over his blood and muscles.

Other than this, the medicinal liquid also granted him astonishing physical strength. Currently, his breath was long and drawn out, and the endurance of his muscles was terrifying. If he were to only use ordinary sword techniques, he would not have a problem even if he would have to fight continuously for three days and three nights.

Even when performing the Supreme Mistwind Sword, he would only start feeling exhausted after four hours.

In his current state, Fang Xingjian's current attributes were now:

Name

Fang Xingjian

Age

16

Occupation

Windshadow Sword Divinity

Level

10

Strength

51+4

Agility

79+4

Reaction

50

Endurance

43

Flexibility

43

The attributes above come into effect once the Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves is activated

Due to Perfect Muscles, +4 in strength and agility (10% of the endurance attribute)

Nurturing Sword Techniques

31 sets

Training Sword Techniques

4 sets

Supreme Mistwind Sword

Level 18

Specialities:

Genius Swordsmanship,

Elementary Survival Instinct,

Internal Healing,

Internal Training,

Sword Specialist,

High Agility Motion Vision,

Heightened Reflexes,

Perfect Muscles

Elementary Berserkness

Potential

8,500 point increase/day

Waves

Level 3 Sonido Sword Zephyr Waves

Mental Cultivation Method

Level 2 Ice Age Meditation Art

Currently, when he executed the Supreme Mistwind Sword, it would continuously accelerate, and after a few minutes he could achieve a tremendous speed, about three times faster. A three feet long sword-light would form on the sword, created by the high speed air currents. If he were to use Boundaries Negation as well, even he himself could well be astonished by his combat prowess!

‘No, this is still not enough. At the very least, Rebecca was still be able to suppress me the other day, relying on her strength, agility and other attributes which were over 100 points.

‘But I wonder... If I were to use Boundaries Negation, what would be my chances of winning be then?’

Right now, Fang Xingjian always had 50,000 potential points at

the ready so that he could execute Boundaries Negation anytime.

This, because he had tested it out. His current limit was to use 50,000 potential points in order to execute Boundaries Negation for fifty seconds in a single day. If he went on any longer, his body could collapse. After executing Boundaries Negation for fifty seconds, it was impossible for him to use it again during the same day.

It was a pity that Fang Xingjian had not seen Rebecca's limits. While he estimated that after using both Boundaries Negation and the Supreme Mistwind Sword for twenty seconds he would be able to continue fighting at supersonic speed for another thirty seconds, he was not sure if he would be able to defeat Rebecca within these thirty seconds.

But putting aside old freaks like Rebecca, who had been at the peak of the first transition for decades, ordinary first transitioned Knights would definitely not be Fang Xingjian's match at all.

As he thought of this, he had already flung the dagger in his hands away, commanding in an indifferent voice, "Clothes."

By his side, naturally, there were people to help him shower and change. Just as he was getting dressed, Huang Lin had impatiently walked in, and as soon as he saw Fang Xingjian he said, "Come with me quickly. A master from the Royal Capital has just arrived and is here to design your Empire's Divine Weapon for you.

"Quickly. Go and talk to him. Oh, right. During this time, have you thought of the kind of weapon you want?"

Fang Xingjian's eyes lit up. He had long been sick of the practice swords that kept breaking. He replied, "I've long decided on it."

Chapter 72 Great Master

Huang Lin walked ahead, telling Fang Xingjian, “Seems like the Association holds you in very high regard. The great master they’ve sent this time is Griffin, one of the great masters ranked amongst the first ten in the Royal Weaponry.

“When you speak to him later, you must be more polite. Although these great masters are not strong, their workmanship in forging weapons and equipments has reached great heights. If you want him to put in more effort into forging your weapon, you must be really polite.

“That’s right.” Having said this, he passed a silk pouch of money to Fang Xingjian. “You don’t have much savings yet. Present this to Griffin as a gift.”

Fang Xingjian weighed the money pouch in his hands, estimating that there were about two hundred gold coins inside.

Two hundred gold. Based on his current Knight allowance, he would only be able to save this much money after not eating or drinking for twenty months. It was obvious that this sum of money was not insignificant to Huang Lin either, but it seemed like the other party was really treating Fang Xingjian as his own direct disciple.

However, looking at the coin pouch in his hands, he could not help but feel interested. The bribery methods in this world were really simple and crude, but this was the way Fang Xingjian liked it.

In the next second, he muttered to himself, trying to think of what any ordinary person would say when they were feeling touched, but Huang Lin waved his hand and said, “Don’t say anything. You just need to spend your life working hard, become a Divine level expert and let me, Huang Lin, have a Divine level disciple. This would be the best way you could ever pay me back.”

“I will work hard, Master.”

Fang Xingjian followed Huang Lin to the study, and once they were there the latter waved his hand and said, “Go on. I don’t wish to see anyone from the Imperial Capital. I’ll be waiting for you in the training grounds. You’re done with soaking in the medicinal liquid. From today onwards, you’ll spar with me. The Regional Selection is different from the Prefectural Selection. And after learning the Killing technique, battle experience is an extremely important factor.” Having said his piece, Huang Lin took his leave and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Fang Xingjian nodded as he headed towards the study. A white-haired elderly man had long been waiting there, sitting on a chair and sipping tea.

Seeing Fang Xingjian’s entrance, he twitched his brows and scrutinized Fang Xingjian all over as he said, “Your disposition is calm, your steps are strong, your arms are long and slender, your eyes are sharp as swords. You’re really a good swordsman.”

He then waved towards Fang Xingjian and said, “Come over here, I’ll take your measurements.”

Fang Xingjian walked up, handing over the money pouch to the white-haired elderly man personally.

The man seemed to have long reached an understanding with him, not saying a word as he received the money pouch, and pocketing it as if nothing had happened.

However, after briefly weighing the pouch, a smile immediately appeared on his face.

“I’ll take your measurements first. You can tell me what kind of weapon you want while I’m at it.” The white-haired elderly man smiled and said, “Oh right, my name is Griffin.”

The elderly took out a measuring tape and measured Fang Xingjian’s fingers, arms, and even took various measurements

including his chest and waist measurements, as well as his height, all the while listening to Fang Xingjian's descriptions.

Fang Xingjian had long ago talked with Huang Lin about what sort of Empire's Divine Weapon he would like, and had also heard the Headmaster's description of the Empire's Divine Weapons.

Fang Xingjian said, "I want a longsword. Firstly, it must be sturdy. Secondly, it must have the effect of a soft sword and be able to freely change its shape or even extend its length. It must also be very sharp.

"What I'm training is the Supreme Mistwind Sword, so I hope that there'll be wind imprints and vent holes through its blade, such that when the sword slashes air currents, it'll create special sword Qi."

As Fang Xingjian raised a pile of requests, the white-haired elderly man nodded as he gauged Fang Xingjian's physical attributes. He then heard Fang Xingjian saying, "One more thing. I hope that it can be made with the bone remains of a Knight who has at least gone through the first transition as the main ingredient. It would be best if the person also had a job which controls the atmosphere."

Griffin sized up Fang Xingjian and said, "You know your stuff well.

"An expert who was a Knight and completed at least the first transition would tend to have great achievements in the cultivation of his Waves and communication with ether particles. Under the enhancement of the Waves, their bones would tend to be even sturdier than steel reinforcement bars. And especially since they receive the continuous enhancement of ether particles, they would tend to have some special powers even after the person dies.

As long as the Waves were a good match, weapons made from such remains would tend to be able to increase the individual's

damaging powers.

However, naturally, there were not many experts willing to donate their remains to the Empire to be used for weapons forging. Most of the Empire's remains of experts tended to come from external battles, and each weapon forged from the remains was said to be extremely valuable.

Equipments forged with valuable ingredients and having various special abilities were known as the Empire's Divine Weapons.

And those which had Knight's remains added to them were separately known as Remains Divine Weapons. The ones made from a first transitioned Knight's remains were known as Inferior Remains Divine Weapons, while the ones made from the remains of a Conferred Knight who had gone through the second transition were known as Superior Remains Divine Weapons.

There was even equipment made from a Divine level expert's remains, which was known as Divine Remains Equipment. It had unbelievably strong powers, and it was part of the great world treasure often known as Divine Equipment.

Seeing Fang Xingjian's gaze, Griffin smiled and said, "It's basically impossible for normal Knights to wish to get a Remains Divine Weapon. However..."

Suddenly, his tone changed and said, "Fang Xingjian, you're really lucky. You're extremely talented and you've attracted a certain big shot's attention and you're highly regarded. He told me to take good care of you, and bestowed upon you the backbone of a Conferred Knight who completed the second transition. I'll use this backbone to forge a longsword for you. It'll be a Superior Divine Weapon."

Griffin patted Fang Xingjian on the shoulders as he said with a tinge of envy, "With the care of this big shot, your future will definitely be smooth-sailing. With that person's support, it may not be impossible for you to become a Divine level expert.

“I’ll need you to take care of me in the future too.”

Fang Xingjian’s eyes gleamed, many emotions fluctuating in his heart. He understood clearly that the time had finally come.

During this time, putting aside Kirst’s aristocrats, many other clans had attempted to toss out the olive branch to Fang Xingjian, but they had all been fended off by Huang Lin and the Headmaster.

However, this time, it was an olive branch from the Imperial Capital, and it was offered by one of the top ten great masters from the Royal Weaponry. It was obviously difficult to reject this one.

However, Fang Xingjian did not plan to reject it. In fact, it was just as he had told Kyle - it was impossible for one to be completely free in this world. Even with his talent, before he became invincible he would need to find himself a strong backing.

As the saying went, no matter if one picked up literary arts or martial arts, the end goal would be to offer one’s service to the king and the royalty. He did not mind selling off his abilities and future, but it definitely had to be for a good price.

Therefore, he asked, “I wonder which Lord from the Imperial Capital is so generous.”

Griffin replied, “See for yourself.” Saying that, he took out a piece of yellowed paper with irregular empty spots on its edges. It had a unique smell similar to sulphur, and it was hard to tell how many years it had gone through.

What really caught one’s eye was, as Fang Xingjian could himself could tell, that the piece of paper was filled with a sense of evil.

Griffin tossed out the paper, and it floated in the air. He kneeled down, saying respectfully, “We welcome Your Highness’s arrival”.

Before his words ended, the piece of paper burst into flames by itself in the air, but it did not turn into ashes. On the contrary, bundles of flames rose from the paper, dancing about in the air, forming the picture of a man’s head.

Chapter 73 Prince

The head formed by the flames was that of a man's, who, seeing the shocked look on Fang Xingjian's face, revealed a satisfied smile.

"There's no need to be shocked, this is my fire clone. My actual body is in the Imperial Capital thousands of miles away, talking to you through secret arts."

"So, you are Fang Xingjian? The genius who took only slightly more than three months to transition into a Windstorm Sword Hero?"

His eyes were extremely sharp, his rectangular face seemingly stern, rigid and full of prestige. He was around forty years of age, his manner of talking instinctively embodying a sense of overbearing superiority. He was clearly a person of high status.

Not waiting for Fang Xingjian to reply, he continued. "I am the grandson of Godias, the son of Alexander, the future King of Sinkoda. My name George Krieg. Are you willing to pledge your loyalty to me?"

George Krieg, the First Prince of Sinkoda, was the first in line to the throne.

Fang Xingjian's brows twitched, instinctively annoyed by his tone, and replied, "I would have to see what price the First Prince is willing to offer."

The other party's air of superiority, as if everything was within his control, as if he was the center of the universe, and that tone which seemed to belong to that of the King of all gods made him very dissatisfied.

Hearing Fang Xingjian's reply, the silhouette in the flames frowned. "What impudence! In this great world, it is the Empire and the royal family's rule who helped everyone learn, train, and transition. You all should be willing to serve the Empire and be

ready to give your lives for the cause. As the Empire's direct heir, I have inherited the previous generations' hard work and the will to unify the world.

“Pledging your loyalty to me is unquestionable, why would you hesitate?”

With that, he changed his tone and said, “You are extremely talented, with extraordinary gifts that I very much appreciate. Hence, I've ordered Master Griffin to come here, and have also bestowed the remains of a Conferred Knight, for him to forge a Superior Remains Divine Weapon especially for you.

“As long as you are under me, countless secret manuals to divine techniques, countless secret arts as well as treasures of the heaven and earth will be yours. Even if it's the remains of Aurora Sword Spirit McDowell's remains (the last Divine Warrior to attain Windstorm Sword Hero for his first job transition), it's not impossible for me to retrieve these from the Royal Treasury and bestow them upon you.”

Griffin, who was beside him, said, “Fang Xingjian, why are you not thanking the First Prince for his grace? The First Prince has the destiny to rule, he is the successor to the Empire. Among the five princes, only the First Prince has been conquering lands for the Empire, establishing brilliant war achievements. In the future, the throne of the Empire will definitely belong to the First Prince.

“Being highly regarded by the First Prince and being able to display your talents are the luckiest things to happen to you in your whole life. What are still you hesitating for?”

Fang Xingjian had heard long heard from Huang Lin about certain powers in the Empire. The Empire's King, Alexander Krieg, had been obsessed with martial arts when he was young, and had only married and began a family at the age of thirty. Now, at the age of eighty, he had five princes to his name.

Among the five princes, the First Prince was the strongest,

having gone through the second job transition and at level 29, only a step away from breaking through to the Divine level.

Particularly, his mother's clan had powerful wide influence, extending to the government and the commoners.

The First Prince himself was also the follower of the biggest faction in the Empire, the 'Ancient Path of Hell'. Over the years, through the conquering of lands for the Empire, his prestige in the military had risen extremely high. He had gathered countless valiant warriors and an endless number of advisors under him. He had even gathered a bunch of elites from the Ancient Path of Hell. Be it abilities or reputation, he was above all.

Fang Xingjian frowned. Though he was not pleased with the other party's tone, he knew that such mannerism in such a feudal country was already considered to be polite towards those which the First Prince considered to be men of talent.

For the sake of the Remains Divine Weapon, he nodded and said, "Your Highness, I'm grateful for your appreciation."

"Mm," the First Prince nodded slightly. "Use your fingers to sign your name here. From now on, you will be my trusted subordinate, and an important member of the Empire in the future. You'll enjoy a life of unlimited riches and fame."

The flames reverted, pushing a white piece paper which had been floating in mid-air all this while towards Fang Xingjian, evidently wanting him to sign it.

Fang Xingjian's brows knitted, and he felt a surge of extreme evil in his heart. He asked, "Once I sign this, will there be any aftereffects?"

"Of course," First Prince George replied. "This is my job's speciality 'Devil's Note'.

"Its first requirement is that before you sign, I'll need to let you know of the consequences. Only then would would the signature

take effect.

“The Devil's Note has a total of thirty-two pages. Each page can only have one signature.

“As long as you sign it, you must definitely be loyal to me from now on. Should you defy my orders, you will suffer a punishment of having all of your attributes reduced by half.

“Similarly, if I were to die of unnatural causes, your attributes will also be halved.”

He stared at Fang Xingjian like the King of all gods, his eyes full of threat and temptation, saying, “As long as you sign on the Devil's Note, the Remains Divine Weapon will be just the beginning. I will get someone from the Imperial Capital to send you the royal family's secret concoction, the Dragon Blood Medicine. It would be enough to bring all your attributes to above 100 points before the Regional Selections, and also award you with the the ultimate specialty ‘Dragon's Tenacity’.

“Although you are extremely gifted, your powers are still lacking. I will assign you twelve of my ‘Hell Demon King’ who have already gone through their second job transition.

“Haha, as long as you can make it through next year's Regional Selection, I can even gift you a portion of McDowell's remains, allowing you to become the strongest Conferred Knight.

“Of course, you may also reject my offer.” Saying that, dense murderous intent oozed from the First Prince, and, without holding back his thoughts he continued saying, “But if you were to reject it, I can promise you that even though the Empire is enormous, there will be no place for you here.”

Each time Griffin heard the First Prince's offer he would shudder, his eyes staring daggers at Fang Xingjian, so full of jealousy and envy that it seemed as though they would burst into flames at any moment.

When the First Prince promised to take out McDowell's remain in particular, Griffin's pupils had dilated and his breathing had turned urgent. In the whole Empire, how many Remains Divine Weapon which had been forged with a Divine Warrior's remains were there? Such Divine Weapons were rare indeed.

However, Fang Xingjian's brows had started to furrow when the First Prince mentioned the Devil's Note. When the First Prince finished his words, Fang Xingjian had already decided.

Looking at Griffin gradually stepping behind him, and feeling the increasing temperature of the First Prince's flaming head, the Ice Age Meditation Art circulated unceasingly in Fang Xingjian's consciousness, his thoughts becoming clearer and clearer.

'He comes with ill intentions.'

He watched as the First Prince and Griffin slowly cornered him from his front and back, feeling murderous intent recklessly hurled out from the two of them, and his brows furrowed deeper.

Fang Xingjian calmly said, "With such good conditions, of course I'll agree." With that, he slowly extended his finger and reached out towards the paper from the Devil's Note.

The First Prince nodded, letting out a satisfied grin. Griffin exhaled a sigh of relief. At least this Fang Xingjian was unlike other rigid minded ones. Being relieved, the muscles in his four limbs relaxed.

But in the next instant, Fang Xingjian's sent a tremendous amount of strength into his fingers, forming a sword with them as he jabbed the paper. With a light bang, the paper from the Devil's Note retreated. Fang Xingjian felt as if he had jabbed into granite. He had intended to just tear this page of the Devil's Note, but it seemed impossible for him to do so.

However, although the Devil's Note did not explode, the First Prince let out a loud cry of pain.

“You’re courting death!” Flames erupted in the air, as if a bomb had exploded. The flames previously part of the First Prince’s silhouette had turned into multifarious flaming streams, pouncing towards Fang Xingjian in waves smelling of sulfur.

Fang Xingjian had already fired up his physical strength right after his previous attack. He retreated at full speed, simultaneously slashing through the air with a chop. Suddenly, tens of Sword Qis appeared, tearing the atmosphere apart. Under Fang Xingjian’s nimble control, they were like nimble serpents leaping into the air, slashing down on the First Prince’s fire clone and on Griffin.

With a bang, the sword Qis that landed on the First Prince’s fire clone were instantly shattered, after which the clone started relentlessly dashing after Fang Xingjian.

Sword Qis revolved around Fang Xingjian, his entire body charging towards the door as if it were a tornado. Griffin, who had secretly been guarding the door, threw a punch, releasing a violent force and giving rise to strong gales. It made a mess out of the flower vases and books in the room, blowing them all around. They had also cleanly broken through all the sword Qis that Fang Xingjian had sent towards him.

“Stop right there!” His five fingers stretched, Reduced Force Field fully activated, about to seal the door shut.

But how horrifying was Fang Xingjian’s speed? Despite Griffin being a Master level character in the Royal Treasury, in terms of individual capabilities he was only in the mid-range amongst those who had gone through their first job transition.

Fang Xingjian pulled his sword from his sheath and slashed continuously, hundreds of Sword Qi surrounding his body like countless white dragons and rushing him out in sounds of thunder claps and the air blasts.

With a bang, just before Griffin’s Reduced Force Field had fully sealed the door, Fang Xingjian broke through it, dashing out like a

tornado.

At the same time, the flames chased after him out the door, while the page from the Devil's Note scuttled into the flames, causing a violent eruption. The flames expanded continuously at great speed, shaping the First Prince's whole body.

The human-like flame figure stood at four to five meters above the ground, looking towards Fang Xingjian hundreds of meters away, who, encompassed by sword Qis, was creating atmospheric dragons,.

Fang Xingjian stood still, staring into the eyes of the First Prince, his gaze cold, and without any fear or anxiety.

The First Prince's body of flames caused the air to tremble as he coldly stated, "Hmph, very well, I now value you even more.

"But I should warn you beforehand. Amongst those whom I have set my eyes on, there has been none who have been able to escape."

As he spoke, the flames from the fire clone once again surged seven to eight metres tall, as if the fire deity had descended onto the world. Even the surrounding plants and buildings were all emitting a faint green smoke.

"A genius like you must be under my control, or you will be a great threat to the Empire's rule.

"Today, I will let you have a look at my abilities, so that you'll give up and fully devote yourself to me."

However, right at this moment, two shadows - one in front and one behind - had surrounded the First Prince.

"George Krieg," Huang Lin gritted his teeth, "This place is not for you to act presumptuously. To recklessly attack a Knight of the Empire... Even if you are a prince, you'll have to be questioned by the Royal Knight Association."

The First Prince replied with disdain, "Every mountain and river

in this world, every single living being is in my control! So what of a mere Knight? Let alone Fang Xingjian! Even if it's the Royal Knight Association, it'll eventually be within my grasp!

“But you, Huang Lin... We haven't met in many years. Let me assess whether your swordsman skills have improved...”

Chapter 74 Falling Back

“George Krieg, you dare act with such impudence in my academy with a mere fire clone?”

The Headmaster, who had initially appeared to be a kind and friendly elderly man, suddenly frowned in fury. The muscles all over his body swelled up like a balloon, light gleaming from his eyes, as his aura started escalating at an astonishing speed.

It was the first time Fang Xingjian had seen him so furious. Others had told him that the Headmaster, a level 26, had completed the second transition to become a Tyrant Fist of the Azure Skies. His abilities were probably above Huang Lin's. However, this was the first time he had seen the Headmaster showcasing his prowess.

Many people were unable to level up for their second transition and got stuck at various levels instead. This was because after completing the second transition, they would need to devote an enormous amount of hard work and effort to reach each additional level. Fang Xingjian had yet to research this in detail.

Hearing the Headmaster's words, the First Prince could not help but furrow his brows, “Jackson, are you thinking of going against me as well?”

“Going against you?” The Headmaster frowned, his hair rising as he gave a cold laughter and said, “George, you come to my school and bully my student. Even if we were to bring this to his Majesty, I would not be afraid of confronting you!”

“As for this fire clone of yours, you can just leave it here.”

Before he even finished speaking, the Headmaster punched forward, instantly causing an explosion. The flames from the surface of the silhouette were blasted away, a large amount of sparks and ashes scattering all over. The First Prince cried out in

pain and bellowed furiously, “Jackson! Who gave you the permission to assault a member of the royalty?!”

“Hahaha!” the Headmaster laughed boisterously. His fists opened and closed, like the main cannons on a battleship. With each punch, a thunderous sounds would ring out in the atmosphere, and cracks would appear on the ground. Huge sparks covered First Prince’s fire clone, shattering it.

“If you had come in person, I obviously wouldn’t have dared to assault a member of the royalty. However, since you thought sending a mere fire clone would be enough to suppress others, do you really consider that you are the same as your father or your Master?

“Let me tell you. Compared to your father and to your Master, regardless if it’s in terms of receptiveness or abilities, they are hundreds of times better than you. If I were them, how could I not even tolerate a Windstorm Sword Hero?”

Before ending his sentence, Tyrant Fist of the Azure Skies’ job specialty had already been fully activated. The Reduced Force Field expanded hundreds of meters outwards, and the First Prince felt the force of each punch through the Reduced Force Field.

The series of terrifying punching attacks akin to cannonballs, made the First Prince’s fire clone unceasingly quiver, sparks flying in all directions.

“You old ignorant man... You are so impudent!” The First Prince’s tone was cold and distant, and as his fire clone continued disintegrating, he suddenly unleashed an endless amount of flames and black smoke. A strong sulfuric smell spread in the air and all over the ground, as if a volcano had erupted.

The flames and the Headmaster’s punches collided, occasional streams of air currents swirling out from the collision point. However, the First Prince managed to somehow block the Headmaster’s attack.

But right at that moment, streams of cold light flashed in the air. Unknowingly, Huang Lin had appeared behind the First Prince. Flashes of sword light flared out, and swept across the fire clone's four limbs and waist.

Killing technique–Void Laceration Long Sword.

Wherever Huang Lin's longsword swept by, the sword force turned into light pillars, coagulating midair, and forming a sword cage which trapped the First Prince.

The fire clone's four limbs were slashed off. Originally, the flames would have been able to merge back together easily, but now they were blocked off by the sword force.

“Huang Lin... Jackson... do you guys really want to die?” The First Prince's face turned gloomy, the flames all over his body blazing even fiercer as they endlessly collided against the sword forces and the punches, creating loud thunderous sounds. However, facing the joint forces of the opponents, he was gradually suppressed.

While the three experts continued their battle, Griffin broke into a shrewd smile and dashed towards Fang Xingjian.

‘Hmph, although this chap is very talented, he transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero only one month ago. I, on the other side, have completed the first transition twenty years ago. Even if I'm not that good at combat...’

As he said that, he appeared before Fang Xingjian, opening his hands letting Killing technique–Purgatory Hand–burst out.

Griffin's Purgatory Hand was a Killing technique mastered by gathering endless thermal powers, and forging all sorts of metals. This not only gave him indestructible hands, impossible to penetrate by blades and axes, but they could also produce a temperature higher than one thousand degrees. An ordinary person would simply die just from one touch.

His hands had only come as close as fifteen meters to Fang Xingjian, when the latter felt heat waves surging towards him, as if he were near a volcano's entrance.

The Ice Age Meditation Art continued to circulate. Facing the advancing Griffin, Fang Xingjian kept his cool.

‘This old dude has completed the first transition. His attribute stats are unknown, his techniques are unknown, his specialties are unknown, his Killing techniques are unknown.

‘Let's sound him out.’

A shrewd smile on his face, Griffin was just about to step into a ten meter range from Fang Xingjian, entering the cage of the Reduced Force Field. With a wave of the longsword in Fang Xingjian's hand, a whirlwind gushed out. A part of it charged towards Griffin like a tornado of blades, and another part retreated with him.

With a series of crisp clanking sounds, Griffin stopped the sword Qi tornado. It clashed against his hands, resonating with sounds of colliding metals.

“Chap, you better give in and not resist! The First Prince is broad-minded enough to take you in. If you continue being so stubborn, don't blame this old man for being vicious!”

Fang Xingjian gave a cold snort. He made a small crater on the ground with each step he took. The overbearing energy backlash propelled his body, and with the addition of the sword Qi tornado swirling unceasingly in the surroundings, he was now moving faster and faster.

He continued to move within a fifteen meter radius around Griffin, his speed as fast as a ghost's. Even though Griffin kept launching attacks, he was unable to get within ten meters of Fang Xingjian.

The ten meter radius was the area of effect where the Reduced

Force Field reigned. There was no way that Fang Xingjian would allow him to take a single step near his opponent's Reduced Force Field while he was still unsure of the limits of his opponent's strength.

He glided around, the atmosphere surrounding his body. With the continuous slashes of his longsword, a series of white-colored sword Qis charged towards Griffin.

With a crisp bang, they were once again shattered. Griffin furiously yelled, "Youngster, do you only know how to dodge around like this?!"

Fang Xingjian did not pay any heed to his words, continuing to move at great speed, and creating numerous afterimages. His Ice Age Meditation Art circulated crazily, sizing up his opponents and analyzing information.

'After continuously fending off sixteen sword Qis, his hands have started to tremble a little.

'Each time he shattered two sword Qis, he needed to switch hands and take a break.

'He is panting.

'His reactions are getting slower, his speed as well.

'This fellow's strength should be about 70 points, and if I were to use the Reduced Force Field, he won't be able to accurately grasp where I am..."

On the other hand, Griffin was increasingly shocked. He could only see Fang Xingjian being encompassed by many sword Qis, and no matter if it was the speed of his movement or the speed of his sword attacks, both were like a raging storm. He was less and less able to figure out his opponent's movements.

Another ten or more rays of sword Qi slashed through the air, slashing towards Griffin with loud shrieks. Griffin tried to fend them off in panic, but some of the sword Qis suddenly curved

midway, swept past his neck and made bleeding slits, nearly making him die of fright.

‘Darn it! Did this fellow start sword practice when he was a fetus?’ Griffin let out a deep holler, “Fang Xingjian! I’m giving you a way out on the account of your extraordinary talent! You better give working under the First Prince some thought! Don’t choose the wrong route!”

Saying that, he let out a loud bellow, and his Reduced Force Field became like an air explosive, smashing away the sword Qis in the surrounding in but a moment. He dashed in the direction of the First Prince like a cheetah.

‘Hmph.’ Fang Xingjian threw a cold look at the escaping Griffin. After quickly testing him out, he had seen through his opponent’s abilities.

‘He appears to be strong but is actually weak. Too weak to stand a fight. It’s true that as a master in forging Divine Weapons, he’s weak in combat.’

Fang Xingjian’s feet stomped hard into the ground, making thunderous sounds. As debris flew in all directions, the longsword swept out, and numerous atmosphere dragons swirled as they wrapped around him.

Whizz!

The air resonated like a shrieking demoness, the atmosphere trembling as if it had gone crazy. Griffin turned his head to see a longsword with a cold gleam only three inches away from his forehead, giving him such a fright that his pupils immediately shrunk to the size of a needle’s tip.

Chapter 75 Retreat In Defeat

‘How could he be so fast?

‘How could he be so fast?’

Too many emotions – shock, astonishment, nervousness and many others flashed through his mind. But during the short time in which Fang Xingjian had thrust his sword out, Griffin was given no time to process all the emotions he was feeling before throwing out the Reduced Force Field by reflex.

At this most important moment, Griffin performed the most simple and basic life saving technique of every first transitioned Knight.

With Griffin as the center, raging energy shot out in all directions, and circles of ripples seemed to discharge from his body into the air. They were a type of explosive impact waves which formed when the air was pushed out in layers by the Reduced Force Field.

The air currents gushed forth, and Fang Xingjian felt as if the air in the surroundings seemed to suddenly turn very thick as the Reduced Forced Field caged around him. It made him feel as if he had suddenly been teleported deep down in the sea.

However, half of Griffin’s strength was obviously not enough to stop Fang Xingjian’s charge. Fang Xingjian went against the impact of the Reduced Force Field as his longsword inched closer and closer to Griffin.

The time between the explosion of the force field and Fang Xingjian’s sword thrust had been far too short. Just as Griffin’s brain received the signal from his nerves and truly started to feel terror, anxiety and panic, the longsword arrived half an inch away from his forehead.

Finally, under stress from Fang Xingjian’s physical strength, the

air pressure in surroundings, and the pressure from Griffin's force field, the longsword could not handle the impact from the three sources. Just a moment before the sword pierced into Griffin, with a crisp bang it shattered into tens of pieces which shot out in every direction.

Owhhhh!

Griffin wailed loudly. One of his eyeballs had been pierced by the pieces, and blood was gushing out from his eye socket. Frantically, he ran for his life like an injured wild beast.

The speed of Fang Xingjian's attack had been too fast. Only now did Griffin's brain finally react to it. His whole mind was filled to the brim with the fear and terror of almost being killed.

Fang Xingjian stood there unmoving, looking coldly at Griffin's silhouette as the latter frantically made his escape. Fang Xingjian only looked but did not chase him. Once his longsword had shattered, he had lost the effect from the specialty 'Single Sword World Subjugation', and his powers had now been reduced to less than half of what they were before.

More importantly, he had seen a streak of ember sparks surging into the skies. He did not know what secret technique the First Prince had performed, but the fire clone had charged through Huang Lin's and the Headmaster's trap, had grabbed Griffin and dashed away. In but a moment, the two of them had disappeared.

"Huang Lin, Jackson, I shall remember what happened today. We'll meet again at the Association's trial."

Huang Lin was looking at the First Prince's disappearing silhouette, his gaze filled with killing intent.

Headmaster Jackson who, at the side, seemed to have gone back to the kind and amiable old grandfather persona, shaking his head while saying, "This fellow's mastery of the Purgatory Demonic Compendium has improved. To think that a clone alone is able to

escape from our joint efforts!”

Huang Lin coldly said, “That isn’t just any clone, but one of the clones from his thirty-two paged Devil's Note. There’s a total of thirty-two pages in the Devil's Note, and each can be used to create an extraordinary clone which would not only have the power to control the person who signs on it, but it would also have 10% of the powers of the First Prince himself.”

“Is it that powerful?” Fang Xingjian’s eyes narrowed as he asked, “What is the First Prince’s second transition job? Is this specialty alone so unbelievably powerful?”

Jackson laughed bitterly and said, “That is one of the secret second transition jobs in the Ancient Path of Hell, Demon Overlord. If he himself were to come today, or send a few more clones together with the people he has a contract with, we would be the ones who’d need to run.”

Huang Lin added, “Xingjian, you’ve always felt that the Empire is the strongest faction in the world. Then do you know that the Empire’s first generation King was the Sovereign of the Ancient Path of Hell back then?

“The Ancient Path of Hell is the faction that the royal family belongs to. They choose the two most outstanding princes from each generation, one to inherit the throne, the other to become the Sovereign of the Ancient Path of Hell, and to pass on the legacy.

“The First Prince is considered the next successor to the throne from this generation. Even with the Empire’s rich resources, it can only nurture one Demon Overlord each generation.

“The Killing technique that he practices – Purgatory Demonic Compendium – is one of the secret legacies of the Ancient Path of Hell, one which harbors the most ancient secrets of Heaven and Earth.”

Fang Xingjian’s eyes gleamed, as if he were secretly

contemplating something after hearing Huang Lin's words.

The Headmaster consoled him, "But, Xingjian. There's no need for you to worry. There's still the Royal Knight Association, in charge of all the Knights in the Empire, and George Krieg won't be able to seize control of everything in the Empire. Moreover, both Huang Lin and myself are have quite the reputation. Since he has failed this time, he won't have the face to look for you or trouble you personally, at least before the Regional Selection. As for any minor underhanded tricks... We'll deal with them for you."

'So it's true that there's a formidable character supporting the Headmaster and teacher as well? That's right, since they have already become Conferred Knights, how would it be possible for them not have any backing?' Fang Xingjian sighed to himself and then said, "Then I'll go for my practice now. I have yet to finish today's assignments."

"Mmmm, go ahead." Huang Lin looked at Fang Xingjian and said, gratified, "I saw your battle with Griffin earlier. Although he isn't strong in combat, it's already been many years since he underwent the first transition. Being able to defeat him shows that your progress in this one month is simply amazing."

"With regards to the weapon, there's no need for you to worry. The Headmaster and I will think of something. You can take your leave first."

Fang Xingjian nodded and left. He looked at the broken sword in his hand, fully understanding the fact that his powers were now being restricted by the weapons he used. In fact, if not for the fact that the longsword had been unable to withstand his strength and agility, he would have killed Griffin with one sword strike.

Looking at Fang Xingjian's departing silhouette, Huang Lin coldly said, "Their dog paws have reached out too soon. No matter how fast Xingjian's progress is, it's impossible for only us and himself to fend them off. If we'd been just one step too late, and

Xingjian had been forced to sign the Devil's Note...”

The Headmaster nodded and let out a sigh, “Then it’s about time for us to contact that person. It’s just that after he returned from his studies abroad, he has been moving around and it’s hard to track his current location. It’ll probably be hard for us to find him within a short timeframe.”

“He isn’t the only one we have to get in contact with,” Huang Lin said. “To think that the Weaponry has also fallen into the First Prince’s grasp... We’ll need to think of another way to get Fang Xingjian a weapon.”

On the other hand, the First Prince’s fire clone had made its escape while carrying Griffin. Within a few minutes’ time, they were already more than ten kilometers away.

The two of them landed with a loud thud on the ground. Griffin covered his eyes, yelling furiously, “That rascal, that rascal! I am going to kill him!”

“Shut up!” the First Prince coldly commanded. Looking at Griffin, who had fallen on the ground, he was starting to feel slightly impatient. The other party was definitely good at forging weapons and Divine Weapons, but in combat he was no more than a huge burden.

The First Prince’s fire clone started contracting, and in a blink of an eye he turned into a one meter tall young kid. He angrily thought to himself, ‘To think that this Huang Lin and Jackson harmed my clone’s vitality this much...

‘Hmm, but that Fang Xingjian’s potential is really not something to be underestimated. To think that he is able to defeat Griffin despite only having transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero one month ago! If that’s the case, I definitely cannot let him fall into someone else’s hands.

‘The Weaponry, the Path of Hell, the Imperial Capital and the

northern troops all are in urgent need of manpower. However, if Fang Xingjian continues progressing at this rate, he'll become a great threat. I can't leave this be.

‘Such a talent must only be under my control!’

The First Prince's ember eyes narrowed, shining like two sparkles floating in the air.

At that moment, a silhouette dashed out of the forest. It was Kaunitz, who was avoiding the people from the academy, and who had came to this area to practice his sword techniques. The injuries on his skull had just recovered but he did not dare to show his face in the academy, and so he was training alone in the vicinity.

Earlier, he had seen fiery sparks flying into the sky, so he had rushed over to see what was happening.

Seeing Kaunitz suddenly appear, the embers from the First Prince's clones jumped ever so slightly as he suddenly broke into laughter.

He recognized the other party, since it was one of the countless candidates whom he was considering to establish a contract with through his Devil's Note.

“Tresia's youngster. As long as you're willing to give up your freedom and sign a contract with me, I'll grant you an endless amount of power to be able to stamp down on Fang Xingjian.”

Chapter 76 Competition

While the battle of the First Prince versus the Headmaster and Huang Lin was extremely awesome, from the beginning to the end, the speed at which they fought at was too fast, such that no one in the school had noticed anything wrong.

Furthermore, just when the Headmaster returned to his office, he discovered that the librarian, Manny, who had helped Fang Xingjian previously, was already standing there waiting for him since god knows when.

The Headmaster asked, “Why have you thought of visiting me?”

“Old man, I’ve been watching Fang Xingjian ever since the beginning.” Manny no longer had that flippant and insincere attitude that he usually adopted. His tone was serious, his face was solemn, and his eyes reflected the gaze of one who had been through a lot in life.

“An ordinary commoner, who depended on his own talent and efforts, taking steps forward one step at a time.

“I watched as he cultivated over 20 hours per day.

“Watched as he endured the supercilious looks and ridicule from others.

“Watched as he transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero.

“Watched as he trashed that Griffin until he scampered off like a rat.

“I feel that I can no longer continue to be so dispirited.”

Headmaster Jackson’s gaze was overcome by emotions, as he stared at his son, saying, “Manny, to think that... ever since you failed the Regional Selection over ten years ago, you have been dispirited till today. To think that you would be encouraged by Fang Xingjian, and have decided to pick yourself up and rise once

again.”

Manny’s countenance was calm, “It’s still too early to talk about rising again. My talent can only be considered mediocre when compared to those true freaks. But seeing how even the youngsters today are putting in so much effort, I don’t wish to let myself continue to sink into depression. Old man, from now on, I want to spend some time to recover. You should get someone else to take over the job in the library.”

“Good, good, good.” Headmaster Jackson’s face was filled with smiles. “As long as you don’t continue to stay demoralized, you can do whatever you want.” At this moment, the great expert who had put up such a strong fight against the First Prince earlier had now abruptly turned into an old neighbourly uncle who doted upon his son.

...

That night, Fang Xingjian sat down crossed legged in a quiet room in his villa. While he was circulating the Waves throughout his entire body, he was also circulating the Ice Age Meditation Art at full power within his mind, unceasingly increasing the experience for his mental cultivation method.

His mind was filled with calmness and cold, as he thought about everything that had happened today unceasingly.

After a full two hours, he opened his eyes as he exhaled a mouthful of impure air.

‘The rate at which my mental cultivation method is leveling up is too slow.

‘With the feelings of injustice in my heart, it’s hard to calm my thoughts.’

Fang Xingjian knew that the reason why the progress for his mental cultivation method was slow was because of that old hag Rebecca from the Tresia Clan as well as that First Prince, causing

his mind to be filled with endless distracting thoughts. Yet he had no way of eradicating all those thoughts completely.

He then contemplated on how he should proceed with his cultivation.

He was only left with four years and two months out of his lifespan of five years, and was eight months away from the next Regional Selection.

With regards to his weapon, Huang Lin and the Headmaster were already trying to work something out, so he did not have to concern himself about it.

Now, for him, other than the mental cultivation method as well as the Killing techniques, he would be continuously cultivating his other techniques for twenty-four hours a day.

While his Supreme Mistwind Sword of the Killing Path had already reached level 18, he believed that he would only need a few more days to bring it to level 20. Even if level 20 was not the maximum level, he would still be able to reach the maximum level in less than a month. If that was the case, it was time for him to come up with a new training plan.

‘Teacher told me not to level up first. This is the right strategy to take. Each increase in level for the Windshadow Sword Divinity would provide an increase of 11 points to the agility attribute. If I leveled from level 10 to level 19, it would provide me with an increase of 99 points in agility, raising my speed to an extremely horrifying level.

‘But if that’s the case, if I continue to increase my agility attribute, if it exceeds 180 points, then for each additional point, I would need to expend over 180,000 potential points, as compared to now, with my agility at over 70 points, I only require 70,000 potential points to increase 1 point for my agility.’

However, it was obvious that Fang Xingjian would not continue

to drag on and not level up. Although Huang Lin had wanted him to wait for a year or two, Fang Xingjian knew his own condition very well. He was only left with four years and two months, and to level from level 10 to level 19, it would take ordinary Knights an average of one year.

Fang Xingjian gave himself half a year's time to reach level 19. In that case, if he wished to reach level 19 before the Regional Selection next year, he would need to work hard to level up two months later.

‘There’s only two months left for me to be raise my attributes by using a lower amount of potential points. After two months, I’ll go all out to level up, reaching level 19 of the first transition before the Regional Selection.

‘Then... I’ll need to think of ways to accumulate even more potential everyday.

‘Although my current potential accumulation rate is already over ten times more than that of ordinary humans, it is still too little for two months.

‘But I’ve already learnt the all the Nurturing techniques the academy has to offer. If I want to learn new Nurturing techniques which does not overlap with my current ones to increase my potential, I will need to learn from other places...’

Just as Fang Jianxing was contemplating, his ears trembled slightly, and he heard a subtle vibration in the air.

Supreme Mistwind Sword was a sword technique which controlled the airflow through the sword technique itself, thus Fang Xingjian’s control over the airflow was exceptionally precise. He slightly exerted strength using his feet, his whole person seemingly floated up gently, as if he had become weightless. After which, with a flicker, he disappeared from the secret room.

Outside the villa, Jack and Anthony knocked on the door. Upon

seeing the maid who had opened the door, Jack hurriedly stated, “We are looking for Fang Xingjian, it’s urgent.”

“But Sir is currently cultivating in his secret room.” The female servant timidly replied, “Lord Huang Lin had instructed, when Sir is cultivating, no one is to disturb him.”

“But it’s really urgent! Do you know that tomorrow is the deadline to register for the inter-class competition? Kaunitz hasn’t been coming to the academy for a whole month and it’s said that he’s about to be expelled.

“There’s only eight of us participating in the competition. We were already ranked last in last month’s competition. If we’re participating with only the eight of us, we’ll still be eliminated in the first round! Do you know how terrible the punishments for the classes ranked in the last three are?

“Not only would our allowance be deducted, our cultivation resources would diminish too. Not forgetting that these rankings will be reported back to the Empire!”

If the results were reported to the Empire, they would naturally be recorded in the archives maintained by Knight Association and would be of tremendous influence to every Knight’s’ future. Moreover, to the aristocrats, if their resources were diminished, all they had to do was to get more from their clans. However, to Jack and Anthony, it was a great disadvantage.

On the contrary, if one achieved good results in the inter-class competition, not only could they receive even more resources, they would also receive more attention from all the various important characters.

But of course, because of the difference in the amount of time they had spent in their first transition, it was extremely tough for junior classes to defeat senior classes. Most of them would thus aim at defeating classes who were closer to theirs, or hope to have a breathtaking performance when fighting against senior classes.

And now, Fang Xingjian's Class 256 was without Fang Xingjian and Kaunitz, considering that they lose out in numbers and were young, their performance was naturally unbearable to watch.

"Enough." Anthony gazed at the timid maid as he patted Jack and said softly, "We don't have really have to meet Xingjian, but after he is done with his training, could we trouble you to let him know that we had came to look for him?"

"Mmm... okay... I will inform Sir." The maid nodded, saying seriously.

At that very moment, the three of them simultaneously felt a whirlwind swept by, accompanied by white-colored sword Qis dissipating into the air as Fang Xingjian gently descended down from the skies, appearing before the three of them.

Fang Xingjian indifferently asked, "Inter-class competition?"

"That's right, Xingjian." Seeing Fang Xingjian, Jack immediately got agitated. "The first inter-class competition was one month after the first transition, and we had just learnt Killing techniques. Even the students one year more senior than us had a year more training than us. There was no way we were able to defeat them and thus we were eliminated just after the first round.

"You've transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero. For the upcoming inter-class competition, you must definitely participate together with us and teach those b*stards a lesson."

Anthony added, "Xingjian, if you are busy, it's fine even if you don't come. I heard from Lord Huang Lin that you are at the critical phase of your cultivation."

"Inter-class competition? Sparring with other students?" Fang Xingjian rubbed his chin, thinking to himself, 'Every student in this academy came from different places and learnt Nurturing techniques from all various factions and schools. If I can make use of this opportunity to steal their sword arts while sparring with

them, I'll be able to accumulate even more potential daily.

‘But they would usually only use Killing techniques in battle... I have to think of some other ways.’

Thinking of this, Fang Xingjian's eyes narrowed. He stared at the two in front of him who were filled with anticipation. “Teacher did indeed tell me to focus on my cultivation and ignore the other matters in the academy. However, I've achieved some progress in my Killing technique and it's indeed the time to test it out through actual combat.

“I will participate in the upcoming inter-class competition this time.”

“Excellent!” Jack laughed uproariously, “The other time, we were bullied badly by those old fellows. Xingjian, you'll have to help us teach them a lesson this time around. Hahahaha, you are our class's trump card now.”

Anthony reminded, “How could it be so simple? Those senior students are all people who have been training here for one to two years, five to six years, or even seven to eight years. There are also those who, like Xingjian, were the Prefectural Champions. Many of them had already reached level 19 in the first transition, and some of them have even participated in the Regional Selection before. Their strength is absolutely not be underestimated.”

Chapter 77 Drawing Lots

At Anthony's reminder, Fang Xingjian nodded and said, "I know. Count me in for this inter-class competition."

He had just finished speaking when a strong gust of wind swept by. Fang Xingjian's silhouette started fading, dissipating right in front of everyone.

Jack swallowed and said, "Xingjian's speed has gotten increasingly swift and elusive."

Anthony smiled and said, "Isn't that even better? Although Kaunitz hasn't come this time, with Xingjian around, we should be able to hang on for a few more rounds, right?"

Both knew that Fang Xingjian was very strong, that his Windstorm Sword Hero job was overwhelming, and that his talent was even stronger. However, they did not even think of the possibility that Fang Xingjian would be able to defeat those Knights who were at the pinnacle after having trained in the academy for five to six years, or maybe even seven to eight years.

Fang Xingjian had long returned to the training room and started his cultivation for the Supreme Mistwind Sword. Since he had a few days before the start of the inter-class competition, he needed to make the most of his time, cultivating his Killing techniques and trying his best to bring the Supreme Mistwind Sword to level 20 before the competition. He was wondering what additional effects he would be gain.

The next day, news of Fang Xingjian signing up for the inter-class competition had spread throughout the whole Knight Academy. Countless people were secretly anticipating Fang Xingjian's display of his prowess, the one who had transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero.

...

In Class 252, there were still ten people who had undergone training four years before Fang Xingjian.

A blonde guy with fair skin and a big build laughed, saying, "To think that Fang Xingjian would take part in the competition.

"He's been treated like a precious treasure by the Headmaster and was even given additional leave. Even the Knight Association has approved of it.

"I thought that he'd be training behind closed doors for the next year."

This was the Class 252's Prefectural Champion, Renault, from Kirst Aristocrat Academy.

Renault leaned back on the chair, carefree. A few other Knights who were also aristocrats were sitting behind and in front of him. The commoner Knights in their batch, on the other hand, were busy running about and serving them.

Renault had directed his words towards a gentle reserved man. It was the man who had crossed a few blows with Kaunitz on the day of the Prefectural Selection, another Knight who had come from Tresia Academy.

Renault looked at the gentle reserved man and said, "Xiu Yi, this Fang Xingjian can be considered Tresia's enemy. Hehe, do you want to teach him a good lesson before he manages to progress any further?

"I heard that Kaunitz is now hiding at home, not even daring to take a step out. Since he's not reporting to the academy, won't he be expelled soon?"

"You don't have to worry about Kaunitz. His strength has been recognized by someone important, and he's received special approval from the Imperial Capital. He's exempt from the daily training in the academy so that he can go through special training," replied Xiu Yi, the gentle reserved man. "As for Fang

Xingjian, he's only transitioned a month ago. It's only natural that I'd defeat him. It wouldn't be considered teaching him a lesson in the least.

"Moreover, whether we will face them is still up to the group distribution."

The Knight Academy had a total of nine classes at the moment. For the first round, the inter-class competition split the classes into three groups through drawing lots. Each group would be put through a round robin tournament, having to compete for two rounds. A win would get them 3 points, a draw 1 point, and a loss no points.

In each group, the class in last place would be eliminated, and when there was a tie, the time spent on the matches and the number of participants eliminated in each team would be taken into consideration as well.

Six teams would be left, out of which the top two teams would enter the finals directly, to compete in the semi-finals.

The other four teams would go through an elimination round, and thereafter, the two victorious teams would then face the top two teams, to earn a spot in the finals.

Hearing Xiu Yi's words, although Renault was extremely curious as to whose attention had Kaunitz manage to draw, and how important was this person, that he could afford to get the Imperial Capital to give an order that interfered with the academy policy, he knew well that Xiu Yi would definitely not divulge this information.

Therefore, he smiled and said, "Class 256 is too weak. All of them are merely beginners who have barely transitioned one or two months ago.

"But Fang Xingjian is a Windstorm Sword Hero. Although he's still very weak, since he's only transitioned a month ago, if he's

lucky he might be able to get through the first round and enter the semi-finals..."

While Renault was analyzing this casually, a black-haired middle-aged man ran over to him. His face was heavily marked by time, his skin tanned, and although he was wearing a Knight attire, his head stayed low, and his body bent, making a very grotesque picture.

This was a commoner Knight originating from the lower levels of society.

He ran in and immediately bowed towards Renault and the other aristocrats, saying, "Young Master Renault, the results of the draw are out. Our class, Class 252, is grouped together with Class 256 and Class 253."

"Class 256?" Renault's eyes lit up. "Isn't that Fang Xingjian's class?"

"Hehe, the commoners from that class are all very arrogant. This time, I'll be able to teach them a good lesson."

As he said this, he turned towards Xiu Yi, adding, "Xiu Yi, you can also take revenge for Tresia Academy."

"Although you cannot kill Xingjian, it should be nothing for you to break a few of his bones."

Xiu Yi calmly replied, "Are you not afraid to offend this future Divine level expert?"

"Hmph, it's not that easy to attain the Divine level."

"If we were to fret over each and every guy who might reach the Divine level in the future, we wouldn't even battle any more." Renault smiled in disdain as he said, "Moreover, he's participating after having cultivated by himself for only a month. If we don't teach him a good lesson, are we going to tie up our hands and let him have the win?"

"If we face him now, it's only natural and logical for us to win."

"How is that offending?"

Xiu Yi replied in disdain, "You're scared." Looking at the other classmates who also had unnatural expressions, Xiu Yi's expression turned even more gloomy as he coldly said, "I know that none of you want to risk offending a Windstorm Sword Hero. If that's the case, during the competition, leave him to me."

...

On the other hand,, Class 256, which Fang Xingjian belonged to, was full of sighs and laments.

"How could it turn out like this?!" Jack grabbed his head and shouted loudly, "Class 252 (The class which Renault and Xiu Yi were in) has been training in the academy for a full four years! It'll be too hard to win against them!"

"Why didn't we get Class 255 and 254, who trained for only one or two years more than us!"

Anthony analyzed the situation and said, "It'll be very hard for us to beat Class 252.

"Now, whether we can breakthrough depends on whether we can defeat those from Class 253."

"How?"

"What do we have against them?" In another corner of the classroom, Barbara looked at the two of them in disdain and said, "Class 253 came to this academy three years earlier than us, which means that they completed the transition three years earlier than us, they cultivated the Waves for three more years, and were also trained in Killing techniques for three more years!

"We lost Kaunitz, and the two of you are just burdens.

"I think we can only wait till next year to bully the new students."

Her tone was filled with despise. It was clear that she looked down on commoner Knights.

Jack retorted, "But this time, Xingjian is going to participate. He is a Windstorm Sword Hero with unparalleled speed. With him around, we'll have a chance of winning."

"So what if he's a Windstorm Sword Hero?" Barbara yelled out. "It's only been one month since he's completed his transition. One month, do you understand?!"

"He has only been practicing Killing techniques for one month. How strong could he get in just one month's time?"

"Even if he has unparalleled talent and would be able to defeat one or two of them, there are still ten people we're up against! We're have one less person on our side, and don't forget that the two of you are nothing but burdens. Even if he's made of steel, how many can he fend off?"

Jack's face flushed with anger. Although he wanted to retort, thinking of how his weak abilities were a burden to the class, he couldn't think of anything to say.

However, he immediately reacted, pointing at Barbara and saying, "Then, are you able to?"

"Are you able to defeat those Knights from Class 253?"

Barbara let out a cold laugh and said, "I still have a better chance to win than those two commoners who are the weakest in their class." As she said this, her gaze swept past Jack and Anthony, making what she was hinting was obvious.

She then continued to tease, saying, "And, not only are we unable to win against Class 252, but the one their second year was also Kaunitz's senior back in Tresia Academy. Hehe, you guys better tell Fang Xingjian to be careful."

"Alright, stop quarreling."

"That's enough, let's go."

Just as their bickering was getting more and more agitated,

Anthony grabbed onto Jack while Ferdinand grabbed onto Barbara.

But before they left, Barbara still looked at Jack with much discontent, saying, "Tell Fang Xingjian that although he is strong, the inter-class competition isn't just about him. Get him to listen to the commands and tell him not to try anything funny."

"Alright, Barbara, that's enough." Ferdinand spoke up, saying, "I'm sorry, but we'll still have to trouble you to let Fang Xingjian know that on the day of the competition we'll need to work together to be able to win."

"Him not participating in any of the class activities is also not exactly good."

Seeing that the few aristocrats had left, Jack furiously said, "These aristocrats!"

"They're just relying on the fact that they have more people." There are five aristocrats in Class 256, and even if Kaunitz wasn't around, we'd still have to face the other four aristocrats who are more than sufficiently strong, and who would usually be the ones to call the shots.

Anthony patted him on the shoulder and said, "What do you expect? This is how the world runs. You still haven't gotten used to it yet?"

Just as the two were chatting, Robert (Tyrant Fist Dojo's head, who had completed the first transition before participating in the Prefectural Selection) walked over, cupped his hands towards the two of them and said, "Please tell Fang Xingjian that I, Robert, am willing to listen to his commands during the inter-class competition."

After saying this, he did not wait for the two of them to reply and immediately left.

Jack and Anthony looked at each other in surprise, speechless.

After a few seconds, Anthony spoke out, as if deep in thought, "To think that Robert is giving in..."

With an envious expression, Jack said, "This is the charm of a Windstorm Sword Hero."

Chapter 78 Start

A few days later, the first day of the inter-class competition.

Fang Xingjian stopped training for a while. Looking at the level 20 Supreme Mistwind Sword, he let out a deep breath.

'I've finally succeeded.'

What gave Fang Xingjian satisfaction was that at level 20, the Supreme Mistwind Sword was still not at its maximum level. Apart from the three feet long sword-light, he had gained another level 20 special ability.

Level 20 Supreme Mistwind Sword: the practitioner's comprehension of sword arts and air currents reaches the pinnacle; not only is he able to create various types of sword Qis, but he can also control Qis through the sword, and the sword through Qis.

...

The academy's inter-class competition was held in a valley over ten kilometers away, to the east of the academy.

The whole valley ran from the north to the south and was two kilometers long, one kilometer wide, with cliffs over a hundred meters tall. Wild grass and various plants flourished in the valley, and countless small-sized ferocious beasts roamed through it.

Right now, many people had picked out the best spots on the cliffs, peering over at the battle grounds in the valley.

There were four days until the inter-class competition. For the first two days, the competition would be held within the three groups, each class participating in one round each day.

On the third and fourth days were the elimination rounds, where the first two classes would directly advance to the semi-finals, while the third, fourth, fifth and sixth would go through two other

competition rounds. The two teams with the higher scores would then compete in the finals with the first two teams.

The finals would be held on the fifth day.

For each round, the two teams would enter from the extreme north and south respectively. A small fortress would be placed near the entrance from where each team came in, and the team which took over the other team's fortress would win.

And if both teams were unable to take down the opponent's fortress after two hours, the match would be considered a draw.

The only condition for capturing the fortress was to ensure that there was no one from the opposing team in the whole fortress who would be able to fight back.

Such a competition was full of hostility, but since they were all Knights conferred by the Empire, they were forbidden to deploy deadly attacks throughout the course of the competition, which was focused more towards sparring.

But even so, each year, there would be Knights who suffered from serious injuries during the competition, and a few even lost their lives once every few years. After all, weapons did not have eyes, and it was impossible to completely avoid such problems. Moreover, in order to mirror the effects of an actual combat, risks are inevitable. And if Knights who were cultivating Killing techniques wished to improve, experiencing real combat was a necessity.

In today's first round of competition, it was Fang Xingjian's Class 256 competing against Class 253, who were three years ahead of them in training.

Because it was tougher for them to win against Class 252, which Renault and Xiu Yi were in, most people thought that whether they could advance in the group competition lay in defeating Class 253.

Jack, Anthony, Barbara, Ferdinand and the others had long entered the stage and were standing before the fortress at the southern end, looking anxiously towards the entrance.

Barbara frowned and said, "Kaunitz made it clear that he would not be coming, but what is the deal with Fang Xingjian?"

"There are only three minutes left before the round starts, why is he not here yet?"

"Don't worry, he's definitely coming," Anthony said with confidence, but he was also looking towards the entrance.

Just as everyone was waiting anxiously, clinking and clanking sounds of metallic objects knocking against each other started coming from the direction of the entrance. It sounded as if there were countless metallic items knocking against each other, and as if the sound was coming from very far away.

"What sound is that?"

"Is Fang Xingjian here?"

Under everyone's scrutiny, Fang Xingjian walked out of the tunnel, carrying an enormous bamboo basket on his back. There were thirty or more metallic longswords in the bamboo basket, constantly shaking as Fang Xingjian walked, clashing against each other and resounding with crisp clangs.

Barbara frowned and asked, "What is this guy up to?"

Ferdinand also looked at Fang Xingjian, puzzled.

Zhou Yong and Carter felt troubled when they saw Fang Xingjian. Without Kaunitz supporting them, they were really afraid that Fang Xingjian would take it out on them. After all, there had been many times when they deliberately spoke ill of Fang Xingjian.

Jack ran up, looking at Fang Xingjian's stack of swords in the bamboo basket, asked curiously, "Why did you bring along so

many swords?"

"One is not enough." Fang Xingjian swept a glance over the crowd. Barbara and the others broke out in sweat, feeling as if the edge of a sword had swept across their necks.

'This fellow!' Ferdinand felt frightened, and looking at Fang Xingjian's poker face, he thought to himself, 'This fellow's sword arts are getting increasingly horrifying.'

He gave it some thought and decided to walk up, his hands cupped together as he said, "Fang Xingjian, we had some disagreements previously, but they were all just misunderstandings. I hope that we can put them aside and work hard together for the Regional Selection."

As he said this, he took out a square box the size of a palm from his pocket and placed it in Fang Xingjian's hand.

Fang Xingjian received the box and opened it to find a few gold bars inside. He roughly estimated that it was about fifty gold.

Fang Xingjian nodded, held it casually and said, "Alright. I know."

Behind Ferdinand, Barbara shouted out in frustration, "Ferdinand!

"What are you doing?!"

Ferdinand impatiently said, "We never had any major disagreements with Fang Xingjian in the first place. In the past, we only took into consideration our relationship with Kaunitz, but now that Kaunitz is gone, I don't see what you're hanging on to."

Barbara was so angry that she stomped her feet. Robert and Boris, who belonged to the faction of the hands-on martial arts, also headed towards Fang Xingjian.

Robert took the lead and said, "Xingjian, let us know what to do in the competition. We'll listen to you." Robert smiled intimately

as he looked at Fang Xingjian, letting go of his previous arrogance.

Carter and Zhou Yong wanted to go over and apologize as well, but they could not put down their pride like Robert did. As a result, they were at a loss.

Seeing this, Barbara's fury flared up, "What are all you guys doing?!"

"Just because he has transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, you're all going to suck up to him?"

Ferdinand's face fell. The way Barbara put it, he had also been scolded. He coldly replied, "Barbara, do you think before you talk?"

"Or do you just randomly bite everyone you see?"

Seeing how Robert, Ferdinand, Boris, Zhou Yong and Carter were all staring at her, Barbara lost some of her spirit, but her expression still held fury. She took in a deep breath and said, "Fang Xingjian, don't think I'll listen to you just because you've transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero. I, Barbara, am not like some people who would sacrifice my principles for the sake of profit, bending down to those with influential power.

"Don't think that I'll listen to you in this competition!"

Fang Xingjian did not say a word. He did not wish to bother with Barbara's opinion. He walked to a spot one hundred meters away from the fortress and stuck the longswords from the bamboo basket into the ground.

"The few of you, listen up! Later, in the competition..."

As he spoke, he moved about at great speed, and the longswords all pierced the ground at lightning speed, each of them about one to two meters apart. In the blink of an eye, they were all connected into a line, laid out in front of the fortress.

"I alone will be enough..." Fang Xingjian pointed to the sword circle formed from the longswords, saying, "All of you stay behind

this line. I'll beat up whoever steps out."

"Fang Xingjian!" Barbara shouted out. "What crazy things are you talking about?"

The others' expressions had also turned grim. By suggesting this, Fang Xingjian was obviously looking down on them.

Ferdinand also said with a gloomy look on his face, "Fang Xingjian, we know you are very strong. But by doing this, you're being overly insulting."

"It doesn't matter if you guys don't listen." Fang Xingjian shook his head, waving his hand towards the others, and smiled. "I'll eliminate you guys first, then go for the competition." The reason why Fang Xingjian wanted to this was because only then would he be able to control the competition's rhythm by himself, having plenty of time to spar with each and every opponent, and secretly learning the sword arts in plain sight during the combat.

As he said this, the mental cultivation method circulated even more smoothly in his consciousness, as if he had broken through another great hurdle.

At the same time, his eyes gleamed, as if streaks of sword light flashed in them, especially when he was staring at Zhou Yong, the only other person in Class 256 who specialized in sword arts. He had the gaze of a starving wolf.

Fang Xingjian still remembered that there were a couple of Tresia Academy's Nurturing sword techniques which he had yet to learn from Kaunitz.

Chapter 79 Bet

On the more than a hundred meters high clifftops, Headmaster Jackson and Huang Lin were standing side by side, observing the competition together with Kirst's City Lord, the Finance Minister, the Tax Minister and other characters with important standing in Kirst.

They had all been invited to view this month's inter-class competition of the Knight Academy.

Kirst's City Lord was a shrewd, experienced middle-aged man. He smiled at Headmaster Jackson and said, "Congratulations, Headmaster, for taking in such a good student. He is the fourth Windstorm Sword Hero since the beginnings of the Empire. It goes to show how much influence and credit Headmaster has in training the younger generations of our Kirst. I heard that His Majesty had also gave you much praise in the Imperial Capital."

Jackson, all smiles, replied, "It's all thanks to His Majesty's great ruling. I'm only sharing his glory."

The City Lord pointed in the southern direction, towards the fortress and the seven people in front of it, saying, "Is Fang Xingjian there?" Hearing that, everyone also turned their heads, as if they wanted to see for themselves if that rumored Windstorm Sword Hero really had three heads and six arms, or if he had a terrifying appearance, long teeth and a pale countenance.

In fact, as Kirst's important figures, it was impossible for them to attend every single round of the academy's inter-class competition. The only reason they had all come to watch today was only because they wanted to see how powerful the rumored Windstorm Sword Hero was.

The Headmaster cast a glance towards the southern fortress, saying, "Mmm, Fang Xingjian seems to not have appeared yet."

They City Lord observed, "Haha, I heard that it has only been a month since Fang Xingjian completed his transition. Although the Windstorm Sword Hero's speed is unrivalled, is it alright to have him participate in the competition right away like this?"

"What's happens if he accidentally gets hurt? Weapons don't have eyes. After all, so many resources have been invested in him." The Windstorm Sword Hero. As a legendary first transition job, to have such a Knight appearing in the area under his jurisdiction, was an achievement even for him, as City Lord.

The reason why he was saying this was obviously because he was worried that people from the academy would forcefully exert pressure on the Knight, in the hope of him achieving success sooner. In case any harm came to Fang Xingjian, it would be bad.

With the mention of the word 'resources', he felt like clenching his teeth. It was obvious that he still remembered that the Headmaster had forcefully taken away the Wind Hawks which he had personally reared in order to provide Fang Xingjian with additional nourishment.

The Headmaster waved his hand, proudly answering, "Haha, this fellow is slow-witted in what concerns other things, but in sword arts, he is a true genius.

"I'm afraid that even normal Knights would not necessarily be his match."

"Oh?" The City Lord's eyes gleamed. "Headmaster is that confident?"

"Then how about we have a bet?"

Hearing the words 'have a bet', the Secretariat broke into a bitter smile. He was well aware of how their City Lord loved gambling, and wanted to give him a reminder, when Huang Lin's eyes suddenly lit up.

Huang Lin stole a march on him and said, "Then let's have a bet. I

bet that Xingjian's team will win." The Headmaster and himself had seen for themselves how easily had Fang Xingjian defeated the Weaponry's great master, Griffin.

Despite the fact that Griffin's strength lay in forging weapons, and that his combat abilities could only be considered middle-ranked amongst those in the first transition, the victory still proved Fang Xingjian's abilities.

Moreover, Huang Lin had gone through combat training with Fang Xingjian many times, and had a greater understanding of his abilities. Therefore, he was fully confident that Fang Xingjian's class would be able to win.

As long as their class did not commit any major blunders, the rest of the students staying behind to defend the fortress while Fang Xingjian relied on the Windstorm Sword Hero's high-speed guerrilla warfare to defeat the opposing team, then victory would be easily theirs.

Hearing Huang Lin's words, everyone was surprised, especially Kirst's City Lord. He broke out into a delighted expression.

"Those in Fang Xingjian's class have only completed their transition one or two months ago, on average. Other than Robert, they're all beginners at the Knight level, not to mention that they are now short of one person. If they are able to win over ten experienced Knights just like that, wouldn't it be too exaggerated?" The City Lord gave it some thought and said, "If that's the case, I'll bet that Fang Xingjian's team will lose."

Huang Lin replied, "Alright. If I were to win, then can I request of the City Lord to part with that treasured Knight's remains which you bought last year?"

The City Lord was stunned for a second, grudgingly thinking to himself, 'This old chap. He's still unsatisfied after taking away my Wind Hawks? Now he has his eyes set on those remains I got?'

The remains were a treasure which the City Lord had gone to great lengths to acquire from overseas. They consisted of the arm of a Conferred Knight who had gone through the second transition. He had planned to find an opportunity to get the masters from the Weaponry to work with it and to forge an equipment which he could leave behind for his descendents.

The Headmaster smiled widely as he looked at the scene, making it difficult for people to tell what he was thinking about.

It also made Kirst's City Lord hesitate.

Huang Lin asked, "Is the City Lord unwilling to part with the treasure?"

"Then let me add on to the bet. I'll bet that Fang Xingjian's team will be able to win over their opponents within half an hour. And if I were to lose, this longsword I have will be yours."

As he said that, he drew out the black metallic longsword at his waist, streams of ether particles flowing out unceasingly from it..

As Huang Lin's personal weapon which he always had on him, this longsword was also an Empire's Divine Weapon forged by the Royal Weaponry. Although it was not made from remains, the materials were worth a consistent sum of money as well. They were materials such as mithril and pure gold, which could communicate with ether particles, forming a force field that increased one's agility and strength. As a result, it could raise the user's strength and agility by about 10%.

This was obviously a top notch Empire's Divine Weapon. In many instances, a 10% difference in strength and agility would be able to change the flow of a battle.

Hearing Huang Lin's words, temptation flashed across Kirst's City Lord's eyes. He rubbed his chin and suddenly smiled, "Alright, I'll take the bet. However, it's too little for just the two of us to join this. Do anyone else want to join us?"

In an ordinary inter-class competition, each round would take forty-five minutes on average. To finish it within thirty minutes... it would have to be a one-sided crushing. Kirst's City Lord reckoned that the Windstorm Sword Hero would indeed be very strong, but he still found it hard to believe that a Knight who had transitioned just a month before would be able to one-sidedly crush those who had transitioned three years before.

Hearing this, Huang Lin let out a long sigh in his heart, 'Xingjian, whether or not you can get this great gift will all be up to you.'

At that moment, another person stood up and said, "How about counting me in?" That man had neatly combed white hair and wore a smart cocktail suit. It was Tresia Clan's clan's head, Kaunitz's father.

He nodded at the City Lord and Huang Lin, smiling and said, "Fang Xingjian is Kirst's pride, but he's still too young after all, having only transitioned a month ago. Although the Windstorm Sword Hero is very powerful, he's still too young. I'll bet that he can only win after forty minutes, and I'll bet one year's worth of our Tresia Clan's Body Tempering Ointment."

Huang Lin's eyebrows twitched. He knew that Tresia Clan's Body Tempering Ointment was good stuff. It incorporated various medicinal herbs and ferocious beasts' essences, and it was Tresia Clan's undivulged family secret. The reason why Kaunitz had attributes which far exceeded others even though he was only sixteen years old, and why Rebecca had been able to achieve over 100 points in her attributes while still being level 19, first transition for so many years, was precisely due to this Body Tempering Ointment.

And Tresia Clan's clan head, seeing Huang Lin's confidence, obviously wanted to help him. He did not want to make an enemy out of Fang Xingjian and Huang Lin, and wanted to make peace.

At that moment, another person walked out. It was a middle-

aged lady with a crescent tattoo on her face, scantily dressed. She cast a glance towards Huang Lin and said, "Old Huang, aren't you looking down too much on our people from Netherworld Valley?"

The Prefectural Champion in Class 253, the class which was up against Fang Xingjian's class, was a disciple from Netherworld Valley.

Huang Lin said in disdain, "Claude was not all that highly regarded back when he was in Netherworld Valley. His specialty wasn't poison either."

Tina yelled, "But it's still our Netherworld Valley who set his foundations!

"Do you know how much we have invested for him to achieve that physique, akin to a ferocious beast's?"

Looking at this woman from Netherworld Valley, everyone unconsciously took one step back. It was because the Netherworld Valley specialized in hands-on combat and the use of poison. One could never know when they would poison the air, the water, or their weapons. It was the most horrible and terrifying worry.

This woman, Tina, was an Elder from the Netherworld Valley, and a well-known pain in the neck.

She continued yelling, "I don't care about the Windstorm Sword Hero or whatever it is. I'm betting that Fang Xingjian's team will lose after an hour!

"I'll bet one hundred of our Netherworld Valley's antidote vials. Our antidote is able to detoxify 90% of the poisons in this world."

A pale and gloomy-looking elder at the side spoke up, "Tina, you appear to be so confident. Yet you're betting on just one hour?"

She grinned replying, "I know he can run fast, so its forty minutes to defeat him, and another twenty minutes to let him run."

"Hmm hmmm," The pale-faced elderly man was Kirst Aristocrat Academy's founder, and Ferdinand's teacher when he was still attending the academy, as well as a senior representative figure amongst Kirst's aristocrats – Houston.

He said, "My favorite disciple, Ferdinand, is also in Fang Xingjian's team. Of course I'd wish for them to win.

After all, they are still young. Even if they have a Windstorm Sword Hero, it'll still be tough for them to win.

"I'll bet that it'll be a draw then.

"I'll bet my manor in the northern area of the city."

Draw?

Tina immediately reacted and shouted, "You crafty old man! The Windstorm Sword Hero runs fast, so as long as Fang Xingjian focuses on causing a disturbance, there'll be a good chance of them getting a draw!"

Houston smiled, looking at Kirst's City Lord, and asked, "I wonder what the City Lord will choose as wager?"

Just then, Fang Xingjian appeared from the southern end of the terrain.

"Oh, is that Fang Xingjian?"

"What is he carrying on his back?"

They were too far away from Fang Xingjian and the others, and so they were unable to hear what the students were saying at all. They could only see Fang Xingjian thrusting all his longswords into the ground, and then seemingly having a confrontation with his teammates.

Fang Xingjian shook his head, waved his hand at the others, smiled and said, "Come, I'll bring you guys down first, then move on to the competition."

The next moment, light rose sharply and all of a sudden, the

ground below his feet collapsing under his enormous strength, as he appeared before Barbara in a flash.

Barbara only had time to slightly turn her body, reaching for her bow and arrow on her back. But at the next moment, she was already knocked unconscious because of a jolt to the neck from Fang Xingjian's sword handle.

"Stop it!"

"Fang Xingjian!"

"You're crazy!"

Ferdinand, Jack, Robert and the others all shouted together, and everyone but Jack, Anthony and Robert attacked with their spears, punches, palms, and swords, surrounding Fang Xingjian from all corners.

Chapter 80 Destroy

Ferdinand, a top student from KIRST Aristocrat Academy, was skilled in the academy's specialized spear arts.

Carter also came from the Aristocrat Academy. Although his attributes and spear arts were not as developed as Ferdinand's, the fact that he had been able to rise to the rank of a Knight also proved his abilities.

Zhou Yong on the other hand, just like Kaunitz, had come to study in Tresia Academy, mainly specializing in sword arts.

The last person was Boris, the man who looked like a wild man from the mountains. He came from the Shadow Moon Academy, and was a genius whose talent was close to that of Kaunitz's, Ferdinand's and Barbara's. He specialized in hands-on combat techniques such as fist techniques and palm techniques.

These four people had joined the ranks of Knights at the same time, and all of them were equipped with Reduced Force Field. Now that all four of them were attacking at once, the violent waves of their force fields surged over, putting the surrounding air under so much pressure that a series of explosive sounds started ringing out unceasingly.

Not only that, but since they had all taken action in a moment of desperation, each and every one of them were using Killing techniques.

Ferdinand's long spear trembled and a myriad of afterimages burst out, creating countless illusions.

Carter's metallic spear became like a great python, trembling fanatically, and the tip of the spear zapped with streams of electric currents as the weapon smashed towards Fang Xingjian's head at the speed of lightning.

Zhou Yong and Boris were coming towards Fang Xingjian from

his left and right. Zhou Yong's longsword gleamed just like the sun in the sky, shooting towards Fang Xingjian's face. Boris's palm shot out, suddenly seeming to have doubled. Amidst the raging wind, his palm gave a feeling of extreme heaviness and power condensation, slapping down towards Fang Xingjian as if a gigantic mountain would crash down on him.

The four of them attacked at once, and even though their abilities were only at a novice's level among the Knights, when the four of them fought together, their powers were still exemplary. They had almost entirely surrounded Fang Xingjian, from his left, right, front and back. The impact from the four force fields pushed down on Fang Xingjian, as if gravity had multiplied by several times in just an instant.

But even though he was facing the combined attack of the four, Fang Xingjian only gave out a cold laugh, and with a dash he passed by the tip of Ferdinand's spear, appearing right in front of him.

"What?!" Ferdinand got a sudden shock when he realized Fang Xingjian was suddenly standing right in front of him. Before he could react, his spear had already been broken into several pieces.

After that, Fang Xingjian gave a push, and he was sent flying by a tremendous force.

As his left foot stepped down heavily, dust and dirt went flying, rocks crumbled. With the violent strength of that push, he charged ahead and knocked into Boris.

With an explosive boom, Boris managed to maintain his stance by throwing out his palm, but the collision with Fang Xingjian was like being hit by lightning, the bones and muscles throughout his body releasing a series of explosive sounds. He was sent flying like a lump of mud. His vital energy and blood tremored, and he was unable to even crawl back on his feet.

Only then did Carter and Zhou Yong react to Fang Xingjian's

movements. With a tremble of his spear, Carter let out a weird cry and retreated. He had yet to take even two steps back when he sensed that a layer of shadow had encompassed him. Fang Xingjian had caught up to him.

Ahhh!

He bellow in desperation and, exerting all of his strength, he burst forth his Reduced Force Field, and thrust out his long spear, encompassed by electricity and light, as if it were an electric dragon.

The electricity was like a dragon. Carter's muscles and bones were clenched tightly, and the ground under his feet sunk like it was mud as he made full use of the counteracting force from the ground, letting it pass through his force, shoulders, arms and other body parts, and then finally condensing it together with Carter's spiritual disposition into his spear. He thrust it towards the black figure.

The moment the spear was thrust, Carter felt as if his brain had been emptied, as if he had been drained of all his energy. However, he wasn't surprised, but rather overjoyed, because he felt that this attack was the best he had ever achieved in his life – a breakthrough he had never experienced before.

But at the next moment, a majestic force passed through to him from his spear. If Carter's spear was like a raging electric dragon, then this majestic force was like the descent of a god, holding down the dragon's body, and crushing it without mercy.

The longsword in Fang Xingjian's hand collided against the spear, and the longsword pressed down on the spear, suppressing it, as Fang Xingjian appeared before Carter in a breath.

Carter was unable to react or see whether Fang Xingjian had used his hand or leg, nor was he able to tell where Xingjian had hit, when he was sent flying with a light bang. He landed on the floor, like a gourd rolling on the ground.

The moment he was sent flying, his mind was still brimming with disbelief.

'How could this be?

'My previous attack would have made a hole even in the city wall!

'How was it fully countered just like that?'

Zhou Yong also saw the horrifying scene when in just a short moment, he was the only one out of the four left standing. The longsword which he had thrust out came to an abrupt stop as he stood there, looking at Fang Xingjian with his eyes fixed, and at a loss.

Fang Xingjian waved his hand and said, "Come, I've especially saved you for last."

Zhou Yong's face trembled. He suppressed the fury and terror in his heart and said "I admit defeat, I admit defeat. This should be fine, right?!"

The corner of Fang Xingjian's lips curved up ever so slightly. Caressing his longsword, he said, "It's not. It's only over when I say it's over."

The next moment, he was already beside Zhou Yong, just like a ghost. He had not even used the Killing technique Supreme Mistwind Sword, merely ordinary sword moves, as he slashed towards Zhou Yong.

The latter clumsily fought back against Fang Xingjian's seemingly causal strikes, which were coming at the speed of lightning.

Jack, Anthony, and Robert stared at this disorderly mess, mouths agape. They looked at Ferdinand, Carter and Boris who were all lying on the ground, spewing blood, exchanged glances, and then felt secretly thankful that they had not charged against Xingjian earlier.

In fact, not much time had passed since they had gone through their transitions, and their attributes were mostly between 30 to 40 points. So how could they be Fang Xingjian's match? Putting aside the Killing technique and Boundaries Negation, Fang Xingjian was able to crush them with the prowess of his attributes alone.

On the cliff, Kirst's City Lord broke out in laughter, "Interesting, this is truly interesting. Weren't you guys asking me what I'll be betting?"

"This Fang Xingjian broke off his own arms before the fight has even started. He is truly so arrogant that it's cute.

"Since that's the case, I'll bet that he'll definitely lose within twenty minutes. Now, since all of us are betting on different outcomes, the winner will be able to win everyone else's items on the bet."

Netherworld Valley's Tina, pale-faced, said, "Is this Fang Xingjian an idiot?"

"Losing half the team before the fight has even started?"

"No, no, this doesn't count. What he's doing is against the rules. I'm not betting anymore."

Although Fang Xingjian's performance came as a great surprise, his opponents were merely novices who had completed their transitions only one or two months ago. He had won even without using his Supreme Mistwind Sword and Boundaries Negation, so his display wasn't too astonishing.

On the contrary, leaving himself with only three team mates before the competition had even started, no one present did feel that Fang Xingjian would have a winning chance anymore.

"Hmph, thinking of going back on your words?" Kirst's City Lord let out a cold snort and said, "Headmaster Jackson. Were Fang Xingjian's actions against the academy's regulations?"

The Headmaster smiled bitterly and shook his head, replying, "In the valley, as long as one does not deploy deadly techniques, one can do as he wishes."

"Then did he break the competition's rules?"

This time around, the Headmaster's tone was even more bitter, "There's no regulation stating that they are not allowed to raise their hands against people from their own team."

How could the people in the academy who had decided on the rules of the competition ever think that there would be people who would deliberately raise their hands against people from their own team?

"Then that's that." Kirst's City Lord smiled, satisfied, "Since he hasn't broken any of the rules, from beginning to end, then the bet should still be valid. Don't you agree?"

While saying this, an overwhelming pressure was already smashing towards Tina. This Kirst's City Lord was also a Conferred Knight, an expert who had gone through the second transition.

Chapter 81 Comprehension

Seeing Tina of Netherworld Valley gritting her teeth, wanting to rebut but afraid of speaking up, the Kirst's City Lord snorted, saying,, "Since none of us has any objection, let us go on and watch the competition."

On the other side, the Headmaster glanced at Huang Lin, who was looking confidently at Fang Xingjian.

Among these people, he had spent almost everyday practicing actual combat with Fang Xingjian, and he was the only one who truly knew how powerful Fang Xingjian was. That talent of his was almost devilish, and average Knights had no chance against him.

If not so, then how would he have dared to initiate the bet with Kirst's City Lord?

'Wait two more years, until Fang Xingjian reaches level 19. All the Knights still at first job transition level, including those freaks who have stuck at the same level for many years, won't be his match in the least...'

Spotting Huang Lin's confident smile, the Headmaster frowned, but did not do or say anything to stop Kirst's City Lord.

...

Zhou Yong, however, felt as if he had sunk into hellish training. Each time he attacked with his sword, each time he fended off an attack, he would feel sword light flashing about, and the tip of a sword abruptly stabbing him, as if slashing through space.

Surging waves of Reduced Force Fields stuck onto him like countless spider webs, depleting his strength at a crazy rate within a matter of minutes. He felt as if he was deep in the ocean, every step and every swing of his sword requiring him to break through tremendous pressure, exhausting much of his energy.

Unknowingly, the glint on the tip of his sword disappeared, as he

no longer had sufficient physical strength to exercise Killing techniques anymore. If he were to forcefully execute Killing techniques, they would not only be weak, but they would also damage his foundation.

This set of Illuminating Sword Technique combined Waves with the sword technique, in order to create sword light and confuse the enemies. When trained to a higher level, it would even allow one to use ether particles to produce a sword light with damaging powers strong enough to kill. It was a perfect match with his Waves and mental cultivation method.

Although his Killing Path was powerful, it also depleted a great deal of physical strength. Executing it forcefully when one had insufficient physical strength would harm one's body, and could even result in irrevocable damage to the practitioner's foundations.

Without sufficient physical strength, it would also be very difficult for one to circulate the Waves and mental cultivation method. After all, when too tired to even stand, and on the verge of falling asleep with a sole blink, how could the body possibly be in control of its breathing and blood flow? And how could the mind have the will to maintain different mental states?

Moreover, Zhou Yong was too weak for Fang Xingjian. Fang Xingjian had merely executed over ten moves, continuously draining his opponent's energy through the Reduced Force Field, and it had already rendered Zhou Yong unable to execute any Killing techniques.

With his energy depleted, the only move Zhou Yong could perform without causing himself harm were Nurturing techniques, which strengthened the constitution and nurtured the spirit.

Watching Zhou Yong struggling to execute moves from Tresia Academy's various Nurturing techniques, the corners of Fang

Xingjian's lips slightly curled upwards.

On the other hand, Zhou Yong did not notice Fang Xingjian's change. In fact, he had been unable to react in time, and simply unable to clearly see Fang Xingjian's movements.

He only felt the other party's sword looming over like a thunderstorm, longswords piercing at him from all directions, every inch of space, every little gap, while he desperately tried to fend off the attacks like a small boat caught in a storm, incapable of speaking a word.

Compared to Zhou Yong, who was barely keeping up, Fang Xingjian was much more relaxed. He swung his sword casually, and felt the changes to the force in Zhou Yong's sword techniques through each collision between their swords, constantly making conjectures about his opponent's sword techniques.

It was a pity that Zhou Yong and Kaunitz were both from Tresia Knight Academy; the majority of the techniques Zhou Yong had executed were what Fang Xingjian had already learnt from Kaunitz. However, there were some Nurturing techniques which Kaunitz had never performed before, which Zhou Yong had just executed.

And how much had Fang Xingjian progressed in his cultivation of sword arts? A total of thirty-one sets of Nurturing techniques, almost all of which were at level 20 or 30. It could be said that he had reached the greatest heights in terms of Nurturing techniques, a terrifying level!

This also enabled him to secretly learn others' skills at an amazing speed – not only could he learn techniques as soon as Zhou Yong executed only one or two moves of each, based on those moves he was also able to speculate the rest of the techniques.

It was then that Fang Xingjian realized that his talent in sword arts would become more and more terrifying.

Although his speed of learning swords arts had already been very fast in the past, he was only a mere novice who had not spent a lot of time training in the way of the sword, and who had limited understanding of the sword arts, of their principles, as well as those of the human body. All these prevented him from developing his talents to the maximum.

But now, Fang Xingjian knew thirty-one techniques in the Nurturing Path alone, and had also picked up quite a few Training techniques, incorporating swords techniques into Waves. He had even picked up a Killing technique like the Supreme Mistwind Sword. How astonishing, indeed, was his experience in the art of swords?

Now, picking up those the basic Nurturing techniques was simply an easy feat. Just a casual spar with Zhou Yong had allowed him to roughly learn the techniques' moves. It went to show how fast was his speed in learning sword arts.

'My talent will probably be enhanced the more my standard and experience in the sword arts will increase, and I'll be able to display increasingly astonishing effects!'

A spark of comprehension flashed through his mind. Fang Xingjian had also learnt two new sets of techniques from Zhou Yong, two Nurturing techniques which he had not acquired from Kaunitz in the past.

A crisp dang resounded, and Zhou Yong's longsword flew out from his hand, landing on the ground.

It seemed that he had exhausted his last bit of energy in that instant, his whole body lying prostrate on the ground, heaving up and down from heavy panting. When he struggled to lift up his head, he saw Fang Xingjian focusing with his eyes closed, as if he was thinking of something. Very soon he sat down on the ground cross-legged, no one aware of what he was trying to do.

Suddenly, a smoke signal shot up from the mountain valley.

Zhou Yong watched with his eyes wide, bitterness spread in his chest. He suddenly yelled at Fang Xingjian, who was meditating with his eyes shut, “Fang Xingjian, you b*stard! What crazy antics are you up to?!”

“We’re going to lose again!”

“And it’s all your fault!”

Zhou Yong was cursing and swearing continuously, but Fang Xingjian did not pay him any heed. He was fully focused on going through the two sets of Nurturing techniques he had just picked up.

He then discovered that he could actually increase his familiarity with the techniques even though he was simply reviewing them in his head. Although it was not comparable to the actual physical training, it far surpassed the amount of experience gained by the average person through actual sword practice.

‘Indeed, the stronger my level of sword cultivation, the better the talent I’m able to display?’

With that, he continued to thoroughly disregard Zhou Yong’s curses, focusing his attention entirely on learning the techniques in his mind.

On the other side of the valley, Kirst’s City Lord was laughing. “Huang Lin, this disciple of yours is truly interesting. He could have defeated his opponent with a single strike, yet he played around with his opponents slowly, in the way a cat would treat a mouse. Moreover, the opponent was his own teammate, from the same class... He truly is abominable.”

The people around them also nodded in agreement. Who could have known that Fang Xingjian was actually able to pick up his opponent’s sword techniques within the short duration of their sparring? Everyone thought that this was just Fang Xingjian being abominable.

Tina from the Netherworld Valley looked at the northern end and said, “Mm, the other team has also started moving. Damn, why are they moving so fast? Slow down!” At that moment, Tina deeply regretted betting that Fang Xingjian’s team would be able to hang on for an hour.

Kirst’s City Lord laughed out loud, “I think that the duel will end in fifteen minutes.”

Chapter 82 Retire

Naturally, not only the city and academy leaders had come to watch the competition. At the other end of the valley, Class 252's Renault, Xiu Yi, stood on the cliffs, proudly sticking their chests out. Behind them there were a few others who were also aristocrats, and standing further back, there were the commoner Knights, nodding and bowing.

Seeing how Fang Xingjian had first eliminated Barbara and four others from his own team, Renault started laughing loudly, "This Fang Xingjian is interesting, very interesting.

"When we're fighting against him tomorrow, I must have a good time with him."

"Interesting?" Xiu Yi pierced him with a cold glare and said, "There are only two possibilities as to why he would be doing this. One would be that he has already given up on the competition. The other would be that even if they are missing five people, he believes that they would still be able to defeat their opponent."

"Oh?" Renault rubbed his chin, saying, "Although Class 253 joined the academy one year later than we did, if I, the Prefectural Champion would be sent to deal with them and that burly lout, wiping them out all by myself would be a bit difficult.

"Hehe, so, does Fang Xingjian feel that his abilities are more or less at the same level as mine?"

With a poker face, Xiu Yi said, "Who knows?"

"Because of their great progress, Most Knights who've recently completed their transition and then started picking up Killing techniques develop wrong ideas which they should not have, misjudging their own abilities.

"As for whether Fang Xingjian is overly arrogant or he has really gotten that strong from his training during the past month, that

we shall see in a moment."

"Hehe, his one month of training is able to match up to four years of mine?" Renault licked his lips, revealing an excited expression, "If that's really the case, it'll be even more interesting."

"Defeating such a genius would be really exciting."

...

Just as everyone was standing astonished by Fang Xingjian's actions, on the other end of the battlefield, right in front of Class 253's fortress, ten Knights, dressed in Knight attire, were all waiting fully prepared.

The leader of the pack was a burly man who had an incredible height of 2.5 meters. His lower arm alone was as thick as an ordinary man's waist. He looked just like an enormous King Kong in the shape of a human.

He was Class 253's leader, the one who came first in the Prefectural Selection three years before, Claude. He was an extremely talented individual who, despite being a commoner, had been blessed with four inborn specialities.

And although he had been under Netherworld Valley's protection since young, he had never really practiced their poison arts.

However, his physical attributes were monstrous, and in addition to the advantages he had been born with, while growing up in the Netherworld Valley he had also received the nourishments of countless poisonous and nutritional medicinal herbs.

He had just reached level 19 this year, but his five major attributes had all exceeded 70 points. Also, because of the existence of his four inborn specialities which had bestowed him with great stamina, immunity from all poison and tremendous strength, even the layers of dead skin cells on his body were as thick as the skin of a rhinoceros. Ordinary blunt force would be completely useless against him.

This was an individual born to be a valiant general in the battlefield. Moreover, he had transitioned into the job Death Vortex, which was known to be the mincing machine on the battlefield.

A brutal smile appeared on his tanned face as he licked his teeth, saying, "So many people have come to watch today's competition, to see that Windstorm Sword Hero. Hehe, to think that a b*stard who has only transitioned a month ago is thinking of riding on top of us, and acting so atrociously."

"But this has a good part to it as well. With so many important characters here, as long as our performance is good enough, we can be sold for a decent price even if we were to leave the academy in a few years' time."

Saying this, he raised up two short axes with each of his hands, bellowing, "Hahahaha, everyone, attack! Break that Windstorm Sword Hero chap's legs! I'll bear the responsibility!"

Seeing how Claude charged like a tank all by himself, the other members in his team exchanged glances and shook their heads helplessly.

An archer sighed and said, "I knew it..."

Another blue-haired Knight who was holding a longsword smiled, replying, "Since you knew, why are you sighing? Charging forth recklessly, crushing the opponent with the overwhelming difference between our strength and theirs... Hasn't this been the boss's style all along?"

The other team members smiled as well. It was obvious that compared to Class 252, which Renault and Xiu Yi were in, Class 253, led by Claude, seemed to not care for the status difference between aristocrats and commoners, and seemed to be on more friendly terms.

All the team members followed under the blue-haired

swordsman's command. The blue-haired swordsman smiled and said, "Do you guys still remember?"

"How it was when we first started participating in the inter-class competition three years ago?"

"Of course." A man dressed in a mantle who was unceasingly moving through the shadows said, "We were bullied for the whole year. If it hadn't been for those new students who joined, we'd probably be tortured to our deaths this year as well."

"Hehe," The blue-haired swordsman smiled and said, "Fang Xingjian?"

"As a Windstorm Sword Hero, what means do you have to reverse the situation?"

The absolute gap between us brought by time, the massive gap between our powers, are you be able to overcome it?

As he advanced, he did not see any of his enemies. The blue-haired swordsman rubbed his chin and said, "It's just as I thought. Rather than taking the initiative to attack, they've decided on securing the fortress?"

"Because of the massive difference between our abilities, are they thinking of staying in the fortress, relying on homeground advantages to win the battle or to bring it to a draw?"

He advanced forth for another minute. Although he had anticipated the opponent's battle plan, the blue-haired swordsman still gave out the orders to his team mates in an orderly fashion, closing in without haste, and scouting on their way, as they usually did.

But they did not encounter any attacks on their way to the fortress.

"What's the matter?"

"The team leader should have arrived, right?"

"Why are there no sounds of battle?"

He had long gotten used to Claude being the one charging towards their opponents like a rhinoceros, wreaking havoc amongst them, after which they would surround their opponents, eliminating them all.

But today's battle seemed to be a bit different.

Everyone advanced to the front of the fortress and saw Claude standing there in a daze, looking like a mini-giant at his full height of 2.5 meters.

The blue-haired swordsman swept a glance towards the fortress, his pupils shrinking as he said "Hey hey hey, Claude, is this your doing?"

"Have you dealt with five of their people in such a short time?"

The mini-giant Claude shook his head, "It wasn't me. Be careful, don't move first."

Hearing this, everyone was shocked. All of them knew that amongst Claude's inborn specialities, there was one known as Wild Beast's Instinct. It could sense the presence of danger and killing intent, and it was extremely sensitive. They had relied on this to overcome many obstacles.

However, it was only their third time hearing Claude speaking with such a serious tone.

At that moment, Zhou Yong's stream of curses rang out once again.

"Fang Xingjian!

"You b*stard!

"Why are you all just standing there?!

"Bash this fellow up quickly and you'll win!

"Go for it, go for it! Bring this fortress down, we've surrendered!"

Hearing Zhou Yong's curses, Class 253's members all went into a daze, and the blue-haired swordsman fell into a daze, and frowning he pondered, "Internal dispute?"

"Or is it a trap?"

Just as everyone in Class 253 was standing there, extremely astonished, Fang Xingjian, who had been sitting cross-legged on the floor suddenly trembled slightly and fluttered like a willow leaf before landing with his feet on the ground.

He wore an indifferent smile on his face, his eyes were opened slightly, almost as if they were hiding countless mysteries.

He raised his fingers, pointing towards the people from Class 253, one by one.

Claude spat, wearing a nasty grin on his face, "Are you that lucky chap who had transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero?"

"What is your side up to?"

"Nothing much. These few people on the floor are none of your concern." After Fang Xingjian finished pointing at each of them as if he was counting out how many they were, he smiled and walked over, speaking slowly, "Other than the four of you who use swords, the rest can retire."

Before his words ended, Fang Xingjian's silhouette suddenly disappeared. Claude was instantly encompassed by a killing intent so strong as he had never felt before. He let out a cry like a tiger or a lion before its death, the two axes in his hands slashing forth.

Chapter 83 Sword and Qi Controlling Each Other

Dang!

A sound as loud as the evening drum or the morning bell of a monastery rang out, filling the whole valley and surprising countless birds, sending them off soaring into the sky in a mess.

The two axes in Claude's hands clashed with Fang Xingjian's longsword, and along with the loud sound, Fang Xingjian was sent flying, only managing to come to a stop after he was sent more than a hundred meters away.

His strength was only slightly more than 50 points, a huge step from Claude's strength of over 70 points.

However, Claude was the one who was truly astonished one. On the side of his face, a bloody wound had formed, his whole cheek dyed red, and fresh blood spilling from it.

Of course, although this wound looked serious, it was just an ordinary cut.

What had actually astonished Claude was his opponent's strength.

"Damn it!" Claude shouted out loudly, "Don't split up, stay together! His speed is too..."

Before Claude could finish talking, Fang Xingjian's silhouette had once again disappeared.

With a series of kacha kacha sounds, the air was torn apart like a piece of cloth. A female Knight holding a long spear had not even managed to react when Fang Xingjian slapped his sword against her back.

However, unlike the situation with Barbara and the others, when Class 253 was faced with Fang Xingjian's quick attack, at least three

of them had reacted in an instant. Moreover, the female Knight Fang Xingjian had attacked threw out a mouthful of blood, she was still able to fight.

Claude's retaliation was the most powerful. With a bellow, the muscles all over his body suddenly swelled up and he seemed to once again grow one size bigger. One of the axes in his hands flew out, like a flash of black lightning, and with the force of a thunderbolt, it slashed towards Fang Xingjian.

With Claude's strength, this flying axe could even hack through a steel shield.

And at the moment the flying axe was sent flying, two other killing intents were locked on Fang Xingjian.

An archer aimed with his bow and arrow, his actions smooth like the floating clouds and flowing river, his eyes locked on Fang Xingjian's brow ridge, chest, and upper thigh.

Another man who was wearing a mantle, black shadows encompassing him, arrived ten meters behind Fang Xingjian in a dash, dagger in hand. His weapon was gleaming with a green poisonous glow as it thrust fiercely towards Fang Xingjian's kidneys.

Facing the three opponents' attack, Fang Xingjian laughed softly, his sword sweeping across horizontally and giving rise to a strong gale. It was the Supreme Mistwind Sword.

The female Knight who had just thrown up a mouthful of blood was hit in the stomach by an atmospheric dragon and fell unconscious.

The flying axe frenziedly attacked the over ten sword Qis, deflecting them.

The archer's vision blurred. Within the powerful whirlwind, Fang Xingjian's silhouette was no longer discernible.

The mantled Knight clenched his fist on his dagger and fiercely

clashed with Fang Xingjian's longsword, and with a series of electrifying sword attacks, he was sent flying as if pushed away by Fang Xingjian's longsword.

"Drat!" Claude could only say this before he charged forward like a rhinoceros, at the same time waving his hand and making the axe return to him with a swirl.

His pair of axes were an Empire's Divine Weapon. Other than being sharp and sturdy, as long as they were within a radius of one hundred meters, he could reconnect with them through the ether particles, and get them to fly back into his hands time and time again.

However, as he charged forth, he felt that Fang Xingjian and the mantled Knight were getting further and further away from him. He was exerting his full powers, but was still unable to close in even a little.

He bellowed, "Lal!

"Willis!"

The two archers concurrently fit arrows and drew their bows, but amidst the strong gales, they could only see two figures flashing about unceasingly. They could not even tell who was who, let alone aim.

On the other hand, the mantled Knight was panic-stricken. Out of the whole team, he was the most apt at stealth, scouting and blitz attacks, but when Fang Xingjian attacked, he felt as if he was being thrown amidst strong gales and thunderstorms, and surrounded by sword lights from all directions. At his front, back, right and left, sword Qis formed by many white-colored air currents were surrounding him.

He ran, trying to fend them off with all his might. A few times he thought of stopping, to join up with Claude and the others, who were chasing after them. However, Fang Xingjian's attacks, akin to

strong gales and thunderstorms, gave him absolutely no chance.

Without knowing what happened, he was kicked in the leg with a bang, and was sent flying. He kept rolling for several meters, feeling as if his bones were all shattered, and as if he could not even stand up.

Fang Xingjian turned around and swept with his sword yet again. In that instant, hundreds of sword Qis were circling all around him, making him seem like the King of the atmosphere. He even floated slightly, looking at Claude and the others while levitating half an inch above the ground.

Fang Xingjian softly said, "There's still eight of them left."

"This fellow..." Claude, eyes wide-open, stared furiously at Fang Xingjian, whose silhouette was undiscernible in the windstorm. Claude was overwhelmed with astonishment.

'My agility attribute has reached 75 points, but this fellow is at least twice my speed. How did he do that?'

If he knew that Fang Xingjian, who had just executed the Supreme Mistwind Sword, was far from showing his maximum speed, what would he think?

In the exact moment when Fang Xingjian paused slightly, two loud, piercing squeaks rang out, as if countless female ghosts were shrieking fanatically at the same time.

Two arrows, one red and one white, were released at great speed towards Fang Xingjian.

The red arrow was covered in flames, and each time the flames furiously exploded, it would gain even more speed.

The white arrow was encompassed within layers of vortexes which unceasingly broke through the air, permanently aiding its speed gain.

The speed of the two arrows was simply too fast, and no sooner

had Fang Xingjian heard their shrieking sounds, than the two arrows appeared one meter before him, one on the top left, the other on the bottom right, one aiming for his left hand, the other aiming for his right leg.

To an ordinary Knight, their speed would seem quite fast, but to the current Fang Xingjian, it was still much, much too slow.

Slightly moving his left hand and right leg, he dodged the two arrows with great ease. The metal sword in Fang Xingjian's hand once again slashed out, and countless vortexes appeared, encompassing him. He accelerated, the ground below his feet cracking once again, and loud shrieking sounds once again ringing out in the whole atmosphere.

"Get together!" Claude cried out in alarm, and the remaining eight of them closed in, their Reduced Force Fields overlapping each other's. Even if Fang Xingjian were to barge in, he would definitely lose.

This was also a commonly used technique by Knights who were teaming together against opponents who either specialized in speed or in long range attacks.

However, this time around, Fang Xingjian did not attack anyone. His silhouette flashed and he arrived at the place where he had previously pierced a row of swords into the ground.

Under the crowd's astonished gazes, the longsword in Fang Xingjian's hand once again again created endless sword Qis, gushing towards the sword formation at his feet. The next moment, with soft scratching sounds, countless sword Qis swirled around and tens of longswords similar to swimming dragons were moving about in an area ten meters away from Fang Xingjian, encompassed by sword Qis.

Level 20 Supreme Mistwind Sword's special effect: controlling Qis through the sword, and the sword through Qis.

Chapter 84 Defeating the Enemy

Seeing this, Claude's expression underwent a change. The next instant, Fang Xingjian's longsword swept out, bringing along over tens of swords and explosively dashing towards the remaining eight people from Class 253.

The blue-haired swordsman roared desperately, "Everyone! Use your Reduced Force Field to block at full powers! And leader, you..."

"I'll stop that brat!" Claude howled violently. He had already activated his job's technique, as streams after streams of bronze-colored air currents enveloped his body, making it seem as if he were equipped in a layer of golden armor.

The next instant, both axes in his hands violently trembled, as he activated his Killing technique – Massacre Tornado. His entire body spun around like a whirlwind, over millions of axe shadows flooding every inch of his body. He manifested into a tornado, colliding heavily into Fang Xingjian.

A series of clanking sounds echoed relentlessly. Claude was like a mad lion, transforming into a tornado of massacre, and maniacally hacking down with his axes time and time again,, each strike releasing sharp auras that tore through the strong gales.

On the other hand, Fang Xingjian was just like an omnipresent windstorm, countless sword Qis and longswords dancing about in the skies, surrounding Claude and his teammates within.

Fang Xingjian chose to conceal himself within the tempest, his silhouette completely out of sight.

At the beginning, Claude could still rely on his over 70 points in agility and reaction to continuously dissipate the streams of sword Qis sent out by Fang Xingjian, but as the Supreme Mistwind Sword continued to ravage, Fang Xingjian's speed was greatly enhanced,

and very soon Claude became unable to keep up. More and more sword Qis directly slashed his body, clashing into the bronze-colored aura with sounds of colliding metals.

“Damn! There’s still such a move in the Supreme Mistwind Sword Technique?”

The gaps between the pitter-pattering sounds of explosion got increasingly close, and towards the end, Claude felt as though he was surrounded by countless people, thousands or tens of thousands of longswords piercing through his body each and every moment. He simply gave up on fending them off, and curled up, using his job’s technique to block the omnipresent attacks.

Finally, as though his tolerance had reached its limits, with a loud rumbling sound, Claude’s body stretched out like a detonated bomb. Savage energy, accompanied by the full prowess of his Reduced Force Field transformed into layers of transparent ripples, bouncing out in all directions.

Simultaneously, over ten longswords under the augmentation of Fang Xingjian’s sword Qis, thrust forth at full power, breaking through the layers of attack waves sent by Claude. After a series of crazy tremors, all of them ruthlessly pierced into Claude’s body.

In the next instant, Claude’s entire body, including his head, throat, chest, back, and four limbs had all been pierced by countless longswords.

But not even a second after the whole piercing process, the longswords could no longer bear the pressure, and with a rumbling sound they exploded into countless pieces.

Although the longswords had not penetrated Claude’s body, countless energies had hit his body through the longswords, piercing his internal organs.

When Fang Xingjian used the sword, he had great and detailed control of the force he exerted. Moreover, when he was cultivating

the thirty-one sets of Nurturing techniques, his control over his muscles, bone structure and internal organs were all textbook level. As the force entered into his body, Claude instantly felt as though his internal organs had exploded. He spewed out a mouthful of fresh blood and then fell to his knees.

He spat out a breath, raging, “Hmph, since my Mystic Armor Golden Body has reached the maximum, level 10, my internal organs are as tough as steel and you won’t be able to injure me with this strike of yours!”

Fang Xingjian’s body slowly landed before him as countless raging squalls scuttled behind him, following his footsteps and passing through Claude’s body, like faithful pets.

“Had I wanted to kill you, you would’ve long been dead.”

After finishing speaking, without bothering about Claude’s reaction, Fang Xingjian stood before the remaining people of Class 253.

Claude turned his head and noticed that other than the four Knights with the blue-haired swordsman in the lead, the other members from Class 253 had already lost their consciousness and were lying on the ground.

The instant Fang Xingjian defeated Claude, he also cleanly broke apart the defences of Claude’s teammates.

Had they the chance to unleash the full strength of their Reduced Force Fields, it would have been hard even for Fang Xingjian to break through.

However they were not one and the same person, so there were bound to be gaps between their cooperation. Thus, some parts of the Reduced Force Fields would be stronger, some parts would be weaker, or some would even fluctuate between being strong and being weak. When faced with Fang Xingjian’s all-encompassing sword Qis, and the speed of his sword which did not even give

them time to react, failure was the only foreseeable result.

Claude's countenance turned extremely grim. From the start, because of the stark difference in their speed, he had been in a situation against Fang Xingjian, only being able to take beatings on his end, and unable to fight back. Now that he realized how profound Fang Xingjian's sword techniques were, it went to show that what Fang Xingjian had said earlier had not been said without good reason; Claude would have truly been dead already if he had wanted to kill him.

With a shake of the longsword in his hand, Fang Xingjian stared at the four remaining sword-wielding Knights as he leisurely stated, "Come at me all at once."

On the cliff, Huang Lin was laughing loudly, "I'm sorry, everyone. Only eight minutes have passed. From the looks of this, I think I've already won."

"Damn you!" Netherworld Valley's Tina, dissatisfaction reflected on her face, remarked, "You long knew of Fang Xingjian's actual strength and that must be why you provoked us into having a bet with you."

"Hehe, so what if I knew his actual strength long ago?" Huang Lin chortled. "If I said earlier that he would be able to defeat the other team's ten Knights single-handedly, would any of you have believed me?"

Everyone looked at each other, exchanging glances. They knew that even if Huang Lin had told them this earlier, it would have been hard for them to believe this. After all, they were talking about a Knight who had completed his transition only a month before defeating ten Knights who had transitioned three years before.

Such news would be too terrifying. Geniuses like this had appeared in history before, and without exception all of their names and reputations had gone down in history, some of them

even becoming Divine level characters.

Especially since Fang Xingjian's previous demonstration of controlling his Qi with his sword and vice versa had displayed an unprecedented fine swordplay. The Supreme Mistwind Sword had surpassed all limits!

At this moment, their gazes towards Fang Xingjian were different. Their eyes were brimming with astonishment, envy, jealousy and many other kinds of emotions. They suddenly realized that they might be witnessing the rise of a legend, as long as Fang Xingjian did not stray from his path to becoming one.

Naturally, the countenances of those who had lost the bet were not pleasant either.

The skin on Netherworld Valley's Tina's face trembled. They were known to be skilled in the arts of poisons, adept at using and expelling them. Therefore, each and every bottle of antidote they concocted was the equivalent of several human lives. Even though she was one of the Elders in the faction, handing out these one hundred bottles in one go was an enormous effort. How could she not feel pain in her heart?

Tina shook her head, "Sigh, why is this Fang Xingjian not a student of our Netherworld Valley?"

Huang Lin said in dissatisfaction, "Your valley trains in the art of poison, not the sword."

Tina smiled and said, "We could feed him medicine daily, strengthening his body. See how strong Claude's physique is?"

Tresia Clan's clan head was frowning slightly, seeming even more distressed.

'Rebecca, this crazy old b*tch. Seeing how skilled Fang Xingjian is, it won't be so easy to settle our disputes with some simple Body Tempering Ointment...

'Should we kill him before he matures or invest more... and try

and bring him over to our side?’

But thinking of the price they had to pay for both of those choices, the distress on his face intensified. Only after thinking of Kaunitz’s current situation did his grim expression finally relax a little.

‘Thank goodness Kaunitz was noticed by that person. Now we don’t have to worry too much about Fang Xingjian gaining strength...’

Chapter 85 Thoughts

The Kirst's City Lord looked at Fang Xingjian and the four tottering swordsmen, his face turning even more grim, looking as black as the bottom of a pan.

And thinking about the Conferred Knight's remains that he had to give away, his heart ached even more.

Originally, he'd had twenty Wind Hawks, and every one of them was a treasured possession. They could be used as precious resources for his clan to nurture talents in the future. However, ten of them had been stolen by Headmaster Jackson, and it pained him extremely.

Now, he had to give away the Conferred Knight's remains, which he had laboriously gotten his hands on. He had planned to forge a Superior Remains Divine Weapon, a prized item that could be a suppressing force.

Seeing his dark expression, Huang Lin laughed, "City Lord, may I ask when the Conferred Knight's remains would be sent over?"

"Hmph, are you afraid that I wouldn't keep my word?" With that, he waved his sleeves and walked away. "I will send them tomorrow."

Huang Lin smiled inwardly as he watched his back fading in the distance while the Tresia's clan head remarked bitterly, "Tomorrow, I'll have someone send Body Tempering Ointment over as well."

Huang Lin then turned to look at the leader of Aristocrat Academy, Houston, and extended his palm. "When will you be bringing the house deed?"

Houston replied reluctantly, "I got it, I'll get someone to send it over to you in a while."

Huang Lin added, "Also, don't you remove all the servants,

gardeners, butlers, plants, furniture and such.”

Houston tutted and said, “Don’t you worry, I’m not such a sore loser.” Inwardly, however, he was cursing the old fox; he had planned to remove all items in the manor, leaving an empty house.

Nevertheless, regardless of what they thought about the bet, the fact that Fang Xingjian had single-handedly defeated ten Knights within a month of his job transition had already been deeply engraved in their minds.

To be honest, defeating ten ordinary Knights was something all of them were capable of. But how long had they been training? And how long had it been for Fang Xingjian?

He could no longer be simply described as a genius. All the influences and clans in Kirst would now adjust their plans regarding the academy, because of Fang Xingjian’s performance today.

...

Fang Xingjian was naturally unaware that his Master and Headmaster had won plenty of gifts on his behalf. He held his sword in one hand, every swing and stab appearing casual. But in the eyes of normal people, the seemingly effortless moves were moves that had almost reached the pinnacle level. Even the sword wind created by the swing of the sword seemed as sharp as a knife when it brushed across one’s face.

Four swordsmen rushed to surround Fang Xingjian. Even though they closed up on him from four directions, they felt as if they were the ones surrounded by countless people with longswords piercing through the air, reflecting glaring sword lights. At every moment, it seemed as if there were countless sharp swords thrusting towards them.

Fast!

Fast!

Too fast!

Those were the only thoughts running through the four's minds.

Fang Xingjian's longsword seemed to be pressed against their throats every second, their lives at his mercy, each and every moment. They could only frantically execute all the sword techniques they knew, doing whatever they could to try to fend off the attacks that kept coming like tidal waves.

Crisp sounds of clanging sounded continuously from the four men's swords while waves of attacks were repeatedly constricting their nerves.

Every touch from the sword tips seemed to brush across their chests, throats and temples.

Every strike from the sword seemed to want to dry up every ounce of their energy.

Not even realizing when, they were unable to use their Killing techniques anymore.

Simply by employing the simplest Nurturing techniques and Training techniques, they had already squeezed dry their own strength and broke through their limits time and again, just to keep up with Fang Xingjian's tempo.

Every passing minute and every passing second seemed like a year.

Finally, four sounds consecutively rang out dang dang dang dang, and the longswords flew out from the four's hands, twirling in the air for a few rounds before stabbing the ground.

The four swordsmen, including the blue-haired Knight, started coughing. All of them fell to the ground, some half-kneeling, some sitting on the ground, all of them panting heavily.

At this point, they actually felt relieved that all was finally over.

The blue-haired Knight gasped heavily. He felt as if his heart was

about to pounce out of his chest. Not a single strand of muscle in his body could move anymore.

He stared vacantly in front of him at Fang Xingjian, only to see him standing and quietly holding his sword. He was neither flushed, nor out of breath, and the way he strolled idly made it impossible for anyone to guess that he had just gone through such a tough battle.

‘That chap... What kind of monster is he...

‘I already knew that the Prefectural Champion from each batch would be a downright beast in human form...

‘But this Fang Xingjian... ***** only had his job transition a month ago... And he hasn’t given anyone else the chance to shine ever since.’

Many others looked equally shocked.

Standing behind Fang Xingjian, Zhou Yong had been yelling and swearing at him all the while, but now he was like a strangled duck, speechless, with his mouth agape . He was staring wide-eyed at Fang Xingjian, as though he was looking at an enormous prehistoric beast, and not a mere human.

Ferdinand, on the other hand, was laughing bitterly, lying down on the ground while looking towards the skies. He did not know what to comment on this competition.

Robert looked at Fang Xingjian with excitement in his eyes. He was extremely thankful for his judgement, and it further cemented his decision of following behind Fang Xingjian from now on.

Fang Xingjian sat cross-legged on the ground, his mind still running through the sword techniques he had just learnt. Other than the two sets of Nurturing techniques he had acquired from Zhou Yong, the four swordsmen he had trampled on were from different factions and academies. After depleting all their energy, he had managed to pick up eight sets of Nurturing techniques from

the four of them.

However, after practicing them through his mind for a while, he seemed to realize that everyone else was still staring blankly at him. He opened his eyes, threw a glance towards Robert and said, “Go seize their fortress. This way, the battle will be concluded, right?”

“Yes... yes... I’ve got it.” Robert stared at Fang Xingjian, who seemed extremely annoyed. He was trembling in fear just talking to him. He then nodded and ran towards the opponent’s fortress.

Claude chuckled coldly, “There’s going to be a good show this time. Fang Xingjian, I really want to know what would be the outcome if you were to fight it out with the group of weirdos from Classes 248 and 249.”

Classes 248 and 249 had spent the longest time in the academy. They had enrolled seven or eight years earlier than Fang Xingjian’s batch. They were also known to be the most powerful classes.

The Prefectural Champions from the two classes were recognized as the two strongest Knights in the entire academy. Even that person from Class 248, who had passed the Regional Selections, was thought to be only slightly stronger than those two.

...

Following the end of the competition, Huang Lin and the Headmaster walked out all smiles. They had won plenty today, and the remains given by the Kirst's City Lord could be used to make a Divine Weapon for Fang Xingjian.

Netherworld Valley’s antidotes could go into the academy’s resource reserve. Even if they were to sell them, they would still make a great profit.

The Body Tempering Ointment that the Tresia Clan had just lost could be used directly on Fang Xingjian to increase his body’s potential.

Also, the manor that the ex-aristocrat Houston lost was even more valuable. Even if no one stayed in it, they would still profit greatly from selling that house.

However, just as they walked out of the valley and headed in the direction of the academy, a shadow suddenly appeared before them, blocking their way.

The two men stopped, and after a good look, they noticed that it was Kirst's City Lord who was blocking their way.

Huang Lin laughed out in alarm, "Hey old man, you can't be feeling bad about your loss and be planning to get rid of us?"

"Hmph." Kirst's City Lord scrunched up his face and asked, "It's like this, you know I've attained a great level of mastery with the rod. But... my daughter prefers the art of the swords. I see that Fang Xingjian's sword arts aren't bad. Would it be possible for him to teach my daughter?"

Huang Lin was shocked, and replied, "Old man, you can't be thinking of introducing your daughter to Xingjian?"

Hearing those words spoken from Huang Lin's mouth so explicitly, Kirst's City Lord could not help but turn flush, saying, "What nonsense are you spouting? I'm just letting the young people get to know each other."

Earlier, as he was leaving, he had felt a lump of resentment in his chest, and thinking about how he had to give up the remains which he had only laid his hands on not long ago, he felt even more peeved.

But at that moment, a subordinate mentioned to him that Fang Xingjian seemed to have no kin nor relatives, and if he could have him as a son-in-law, to be added to his family, then the Superior Remains Divine Weapon would still be his, and Fang Xingjian would even be considered half a son to him.

The suggestion got Kirst's City Lord interested immediately.

Hence, the current scene before Huang Lin.

Seeing that Huang Lin had more to say, Kirst's City Lord yelled, "Alright, alright. I'll have my daughter send the remains over tomorrow. After that, just let Fang Xingjian give her some guidance on her swordsmanship every week."

With that, he dashed off without looking back, as though he was not at all worried that Huang Lin and the Headmaster would disagree.

Chapter 86 Blurred Specialty

With Robert running off to take over their opponent's fortress, the instructors who were acting as referees announced the end of the competition, Fang Xingjian's Class 256 being the winner.

On the cliff, Class 252's members fell into a strange silence. Everyone seemed to be recalling the scene where Fang Xingjian was like the autumn's wind sweeping through the fallen leaves, utterly crushing Class 253.

Renault took in a deep breath, staring at Fang Xingjian, who sat cross-legged, silently cultivating, and suddenly said, "This Fang Xingjian is really strong."

"The Windstorm Sword Hero is naturally strong," Xiu Yi's gaze shone with a cold gleam, "It's just that I never thought that he'd be so powerful."

At that moment, strong killing intent filled the two's hearts in an instant. Looking at the youngster who had merely transitioned a month before, but was able to easily defeat strong Knights who had been cultivating for three years after they had completed their transition, how could they not be jealous? How could they not be furious? Flames of jealousy were burning in their hearts, with a strong urge to replace Fang Xingjian.

'Such talent, such talent... Why is it not on me?!' Xiu Yi's eyes glared at Fang Xingjian, revealing a greedy gaze like a snake's.

But the next moment, they hid their killing intent. At least for now, at least in the academy, it was impossible for them to attack Fang Xingjian.

"The others in Class 256 are nothing to be afraid of. The crux lies with Fang Xingjian. If we want to defeat them, we just need to defeat Fang Xingjian," Renault said, licking his lips.

"Maybe there's no need to defeat him," said Xiu Yi, his eyes

narrowing, "Maybe we just need to hold him back.

"And in this world, it's not like with speed, one is invincible."

"That's right." Renault broke into a wide grin. "As a matter of fact, I love opponents who specialize in speed, hehehehe."

At that moment, a commoner Knight from their class ran over to Xiu Yi and said, "Young Master Xiu Yi, someone from your clan came by, saying that they have something to pass on to you."

...

Seeing the referee announcing their victory, Fang Xingjian gradually stood up. Anthony and Jack were the first to run up to him, saying excitedly, "Won, we've won!"

"Xingjian, you're too awesome. You...You defeated all ten of them by yourself!"

Ferdinand, as well as Carter and Zhou Yong who were behind them, had recovered their strength and were standing up. However, their expressions were extremely grim.

Although they had won the competition, on the battleground, they had not performed at all, simply being treated like clowns. To be wiped out by Fang Xingjian alone before so many important characters... it was really too embarrassing.

Ferdinand's expression was also extremely grim. He took a long look at Fang Xingjian, and then turned to leave.

Class 253's Claude was still sitting on the ground, panting, as he looked at Fang Xingjian and said, "This time, it's your win. Next time, I definitely won't lose."

Fang Xingjian threw him a side glance, not bothering to reply to him. Amongst ordinary people, Claude was already considered a monster. However, when faced with Fang Xingjian's talent, once he was overtaken, there would be no way that he could catch up in his whole life.

Seeing how much Fang Xingjian was looking down on him, Claude snorted coldly, with defiance, but did not say anything else. He only made up his mind to put more effort into his training when he went back.

'Seems like it's time to make a trip back to Netherworld Valley. Even if it means that I have to train to get the Hundred Toxin Battle Physique, I must definitely defeat this fellow at least once.'

Jack said, "Let's go have a feast to celebrate."

Fang Xingjian shook his head, "You guys go ahead. It's on me."

Boris smiled. Coming from the Shadow Moon Academy, he had spent his life living in the forests, spending his days hunting and roasting.

Their academy worshipped the strong, and worshipped powers.

He had initially thought that Kaunitz, Barbara, Ferdinand and himself were the strongest in this batch of Knights, but ever since Fang Xingjian had defeated Kaunitz, and now having seen him defeat ten Knights, his gaze towards Fang Xingjian was brimming with feelings of admiration.

"Xingjian, let's have a get together at my villa. I've brought our academy's roasted ferocious beasts. This is our Shadow Moon's speciality, you must definitely try it."

Fang Xingjian shook his head. His mind was filled with the new sword techniques he had picked up today, and was simply not interested in having a get together with them.

The next moment, ignoring the others, Fang Xingjian's body swayed slightly and he dashed off. From afar, it looked like a black line was cutting through the sky, in the direction of the academy.

But just as his silhouette was about to disappear, a voice rang out from faraway, reaching their ears.

"Send a portion of the roast meat to my villa."

Jack blinked, saying, "Recently, Xingjian seems to have taken a liking to food."

Anthony smiled, "It's probably because the Headmaster is stuffing him with too many delicacies, so his appetite has increased."

...

Fang Xingjian turned into many afterimages, and within a few minutes, he created gusts of strong gales and dashed into his training room.

All the servants he passed by bowed and greeted him. With a loud sound, the door to the training room was slammed shut.

In the room, Fang Xingjian turned into myriad sword shadows, displaying the sword techniques he had secretly picked up without holding back.

Today, he had learnt a total of ten sets of Nurturing techniques. Fang Xingjian first simulated the training in his mind, so his training speed was much faster than ordinary people. As such, when he demonstrated the techniques physically, sword shadows flourished, as if hundreds of flowers had bloomed at the same time, spreading out countless brilliant sword lights.

These ten sets of sword techniques he had just picked up were leveling up at an incredible speed, which could be seen by the naked eye.

His current experience and level of cultivation in sword arts far exceeded what it had been in the past. His talents in sword arts were displayed to a greater degree, and within a short five hours, he had already brought half of the sword techniques up to level 10.

Thereafter, he took a short break, and had the dinner sent by the academy before resuming his training.

Another three hours passed, and all ten sword techniques were now at level 10.

However, only two of the sword techniques provided him an additional attribute increase. It meant that these two sets of sword techniques did not overlap with the effects of his other Nurturing techniques, and could provide him additional potential.

A ratio of two to ten. With the increase in the number of Nurturing techniques he picked up, the number of effective Nurturing techniques he picked up would diminish increasingly.

Wiping the perspiration off his forehead, Fang Xingjian saw that a maid had dozed off while she was waiting.

Next to the maid was a small push cart.

Fang Xingjian walked to her, opened up the lid to the small push cart, and saw that there was a big bowl of roasted meat.

It was a pity that quite a lot of time had passed, and the roasted meat had already turned cold.

However, he did not care about this, and directly tore off a big piece of meat and started eating.

At that moment, the maid woke up, and seeing Fang Xingjian's actions, she got a shock and said loudly, "So... Sorry... Let me go heat it up for you."

"No need." Fang Xingjian waved off the maid, and neatly stuffed down the whole piece of roasted meat down his throat, adding to his physical strength. He did not take note of the over ten potential points increase, but merely slowly appreciated the taste of the roasted meat.

"Not bad." After eating the last bit, Fang Xingjian snapped his fingers, and a maid walked over to him.

"Tell the chefs to learn how to make this roasted meat. I want to eat it tomorrow as well."

"Yes." The maid seemed to be used to this, nodding as she took her leave.

Fang Xingjian headed towards the room, meanwhile looking at his Specialties Window. There were a few blurred words trying to form, but still unable to do so at all.

This was something which had happened after he had brought all ten sets of Nurturing techniques he had picked up today to level 10.

Fang Xingjian looked at this scene curiously, thinking to himself, 'What speciality is it?'

'Am I still short of something before I can get it?

'Could it be that I'll need to cultivate even more Nurturing techniques?'

Chapter 87 Information

Early the following morning, majestic bursts of sword Qi shot into the sky like laser guns from Fang Xingjian's courtyard, as though they were about to tear the sky apart.

Every released burst resulted in roaring sounds in the air. Even the cups and teapots in the villa were gently shaking with the tables.

A group of workers were in the midst of repairing the windows near the courtyard, strengthening the glass panes. The shattered glass panes had been the result of shockwaves dissipated in the air when Fang Xingjian had released his sword Qis the day before.

A few of them would occasionally look in Fang Xingjian's direction whilst repairing the windows.

Fang Xingjian was standing casually, a three feet long sword in his hand. He would swing, hack, and slash through the air every now and then, releasing sword Qis akin to legendary dragons coming up from the seas, which pierced through the air like the milky way cascading downwards.

The workers witnessing the scene were struck dumb with amazement.

“Is this the level of a Knight? That's really amazing.”

“That's not an average Knight,” a worker with an ape-like chin and protruding mouth said. “That is a Windstorm Sword Hero. Do you know what's a Windstorm Sword Hero? It's a job for someone who will eventually reach the Divine level!”

On one side of the grass patch, Robert stood there respectfully, watching Fang Xingjian swinging his sword in an unconstrained manner. Unconsciously, his head lowered even more.

Fang Xingjian stood in the yard, quietly practicing the Supreme Mistwind Sword. Compared to a month before, he was able to

release his sword Qis more than ten times more freely. An hour later, the metal sword shattered. He casually dusted off the metal powder from his hands, no signs of any physical exhaustion reflected in his movements.

He glanced at the side of the yard. Robert had been waiting for a long time.

Fang Xingjian waved his hand, and servants carried tables and chairs, dishes, even a sun canopy, over to him. In the blink of an eye, the lawn had turned into an alfresco restaurant.

Fang Xingjian nodded lightly, gesturing for Robert to have a seat, and the latter hurried over.

Fang Xingjian drank a huge bottle of milk, then he started devouring the grilled meat of ferocious beasts which the chefs had prepared by imitating Shadow Moon Academy's cooking method. As he ate, he asked, "You're early today. What's the matter?"

Robert started, "Xingjian, it's like this. I've heard some news that may be related to today's competition." At this moment, Robert, though more burly and muscular than Fang Xingjian, looked as tame as a cat in front of Fang Xingjian.

There was only one reason for this – Fang Xingjian had displayed a strength more than ten times greater than his. He truly knew how terrifying Fang Xingjian could be.

Anyone out of yesterday's Class 253 members would have beat him, hands down. This was the difference between the Royal Academy and his small Dojo.

However, Fang Xingjian had coolly dismissed ten such people, making Robert open his eyes to the scary side of Fang Xingjian. Deep down, he knew that Fang Xingjian could probably stab him to death in a few moves.

Furthermore, it had only been a month since Fang Xingjian had transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero.

Naturally, he was thinking of means and ways to get his hands on such a strong backing. The reason why he had dismissed his dojo and joined the Empire was so that he could get the Empire's backing.

In today's competition, Fang Xingjian's class, Class 256, would be up against Class 252, which Renault and Xiu Yi belonged to. This was a class which had transitioned four years earlier than them.

Hearing his visitor's words, Fang Xingjian set to finish the bowl of seafood soup next to him. These ferocious sea beasts were not only physically enormous, which made them difficult to catch, their vital energy and blood were also ten times more powerful than the terrestrial ferocious beasts. Their taste was fresher as well.

Fang Xingjian had only opened the cover, and a rich aroma wafted out, making Robert gulp.

He finished it in one gulp. The meat dissolved in his mouth instantly, the freshness pounded against his oral cavity, eventually dissolving into a surge of warmth that flowed throughout his body, increasing his potential by over tens points.

A tinge of greed could be seen in Robert's eyes. In this world, power was important, and money could be used to purchase all sorts of resources.

Any Knight could not have enough of such products made from ferocious beasts which could, meant to increase potential, as well as food that could enhance one's attributes.

However, not everyone had access to so many resources, like Fang Xingjian did.

Money and power. These were crucial factors that widened the gap in ability between the aristocrats and the commoners.

Fang Xingjian asked, "What news?"

Robert quickly replied, "I've asked around for information

regarding Renault, the Prefectural Champion from Class 253. His first transition job is Soulseeker Archer. Among the seventeen jobs provided by the academy, it's one which is best against jobs with quick speed. It's said that in the entire academy, there's no one who can match the speed of his arrows."

"Oh?" Fang Xingjian smiled. "How fast is it?"

"The Soulseeker Archer has a skill called Formless Shot. It's said to be faster than sound. By the time you hear it, the arrow will have already pierced through you. That's why it's impossible for the naked eye to see this skill. It's useless to rely on sound either. It's an extremely fast arrow.

"And his Homing Arrow, it can freely navigate and turn in the air, moving back and forth relentlessly without stopping."

Interest deepened in Fang Xingjian's eyes. "So how did other people win against this team? Class 252 isn't currently the strongest class in the academy, right?"

Robert nodded. "Everyone fighting against Renault put on heavy armor and carry strong shields. Five of the team members would stand together and simultaneously put up the Reduced Force Field for defence, then slowly pushing in to claim the fort.

"But even with that, Renault succeeded quite a few times in defeating Knights whose levels and attributes were higher than his."

Seeing that Fang Xingjian was listening attentively, Robert continued. "So, we can use the same method. I've borrowed five sets of heavy steel armor from the other classes. Five of us can work together to provide cover for you while you can rush into their fort after we've reached it, defeating them at once and claiming the fort for the win.

"If Renault is defending outside, we'll be on guard at the gate, preventing him from entering. Should he start shooting at the fort

from the beginning, you can engage him in close combat after charging in. This way, the chances of victory will be much higher.”

Fang Xingjian made no comments. Robert thought that it was strange. Although he knew that his strategies were not flawless, one could still say they were outstanding.

Thus, Robert continued, “Xingjian, although you have transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, it still hasn’t been that long. A Soulseeker Archer like Renault is overly superior at suppressing jobs focusing on speed.

“Everyone in the academy is betting on their win.”

The servants, teachers, instructors in the academy would organize betting activities during the competition. Fang Xingjian was very much aware of it.

However, after finishing what was left of his meal, Fang Xingjian nodded and remarked, “Your plan isn’t bad, but I’m not going to use it.”

Robert was shocked. “Why not?”

“Because I’m faster.”

Chapter 88 Confidence

Robert frowned and left. He was unable to understand what Fang Xingjian meant, or rather, he had understood but he still could not believe it.

'Faster than sound?'

Thinking of this, he only felt the hair at the back of his head standing up, as if forcing him to stop his train of thought.

An arrow breaking through the speed of sound and a person breaking through the speed of sound were two completely different concepts. Robert did not even dare to imagine, and was truly unable to believe that Fang Xingjian had achieved the state at which he he could physically break through the speed of sound. He had just transitioned a month before. Could a first transition Windstorm Sword Hero exceed the speed of sound?

Even out of those people who were at the pinnacle of the first transition, very few were able to physically break through the speed of sound. And those who could were almost surely freaks who had been stuck at the peak of the first transition for over tens of years, or even decades.

'To be able to transcend the speed of sound at the age of sixteen, how can that be?' Shaking his head, Robert headed to his villa. Although his mind told him that it was impossible, recalling Fang Xingjian's confident smile, recalling how the other party had, all the way so confidently clinched the title of Prefectural Champion, become the Windstorm Sword Hero, defeated Kaunitz, defeated Class 253... He started feeling uncertain again.

That night, he took half of all his savings and went to the academy's underground gambling den, and bet on Fang Xingjian winning.

...

At the same time, a senior from Tresia Knight Academy who had become a Knight four years before, Class 252's Xiu Yi, sat upright in his room, unmoving.

On the table in front of him, there was a ring flashing with a faint silver light. The whole room seemed to resonate with excitement just because of that ring.

Xiu Yi looked at the ring on the table, his eyes brimming with pure greed.

'Ring of Lightning, made from the finger bones of a Knight with Waves which were electric in nature.' In Xiu Yi's mind, he silently recalled the relevant information related to the Ring of Lightning.

As long as this ring was worn, and synchronized with the user's Waves, it could be activated or deactivated in accordance to the user's wishes.

As long as the Ring of Lightning was activated, a layer of invisible and colorless lightning armor would form, going from the arm to the chest and to the stomach. It was unable to provide any physical defensive abilities, but it could inflict lightning damage on all attackers, with a numbing effect.

It also meant that after using the Ring of Lightning, if someone were to punch or kick his arms, chest, or stomach, or to clash with his longsword, the person would be electrocuted and numbed.

Electricity was a very special attack. It could use a human body as a transmitting medium, and during the transmission process, it could destroy a person's blood, nerves, muscles and other organs. It was an attack that both the strong and the weak would find difficult to fend off.

'Even if it's Fang Xingjian, as long as he touches my body during battle, no... As long as his sword touches mine, then his body will get an electric shock, and will automatically become numb.

'His attributes are very advanced, and the numbing effect might

not be significant. But if his body turned numb during close combat, it would be enough for me to kill him ten times.'

This Ring of Lightning was simply created to deal with enemies who were specialized in high speed. No, rather it could be said that in a fight with warriors of the same level, this Inferior Remains Divine Weapon would be able to suppress almost all close combat opponents.

An excited smile lit up Xiu Yi's face. This Ring of Lightning was a rare find even amongst the Inferior Remains Divine Weapons, even in the Tresia Clan. But now, Rebecca had taken it out of storage and had given it to him.

Moreover, Rebecca had promised that as long as he could defeat Fang Xingjian, this Ring of Lightning would belong to him.

If getting an Inferior Remains Divine Weapon was considered a great deal, then being able to defeat Fang Xingjian in front of so many people would be an outstanding performance.

It was because Fang Xingjian had just transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, and had even defeated all ten Knights in Class 253, singlehanded.

Defeating him in one-to-one close combat would be an extraordinary result, and Xiu Yi would stand out from the ordinary Knights.

Fang Xingjian was very strong, his talent astonishing, and his performance brilliant.

Many people were in awe of him and full of admiration for him. They also wanted to defeat him in order to become famous, and gain recognition from important characters.

Xiu Yi was obviously one of them.

'If I defeat Fang Xingjian tomorrow, my status in Tresia Clan will rise so much that even Kaunitz wouldn't compare to me.

'There's even... even a chance that I would get in the good graces of the few characters in the Imperial Capital.

'I can and definitely will defeat him!'

Xiu Yi gradually put on the Ring of Lightning, Waves circulating throughout his body and gradually synchronizing with the Ring of Lightning.

'He has the ability to control longswords from a distance, and to send them flying.

'But I can block them with my techniques.

'I must force him into close combat!'

...

Class 252's Prefectural Champion Renault was sitting quietly in the middle of a vast stretch of grassland, holding onto a more than two meter long enormous longbow.

The gigantic longbow was engraved with various streamline inscriptions with unknown meanings. The bowstring seemed to be a combination of countless muscles that were glowing faintly.

Stroking the gigantic longbow in his hand, Renault was brimming with confidence.

This was his weapon, an Inferior Remains Divine Weapon – Sacred Bow, a strong high-speed longbow. It could communicate with ether particles, forming predefined magnetic routes to create a force field through acceleration, and then using the accelerated force field to fanatically increase the speed of the arrows.

With this bow, he was confident enough to challenge all of his enemies.

Renault stroke the longbow, countless shrieks ringing out at the edges of the grassland.

Ten servants were standing in different areas, equipped with crossbows and arrows, simultaneously releasing arrows towards

Renault.

These crossbows were obviously military grade equipment, sent by Renault's clan to support him. Even an ordinary person without any extraordinary powers would be able to create a tremendous force with them, as long as they had sufficient training beforehand. At the very least, in terms of speed such an attack would not lose to an ordinary Knight's full-powered dash.

These ten servants were only about a hundred meters away from Renault, and the ten crossbows were being shot out at the same time, less than a second away from fatally injuring Renault.

But in this short time span, Renault's hands moved so fast that they turned into a series of mirages, five sharp arrows suddenly appearing on the bowstring and soon disappeared, after which another five sharp arrows appeared and disappeared again.

Within the bowstring's tremor, one could possibly even see a subtle ripple, trembling in the air and in one's heart.

In the blink of an eye, Renault picked up the arrows, pulled the bow, launched the arrows and stopped. A series of crisp sounds came from the air, and all ten arrows sent in his direction were shot down.

Renault's steward came out from the darkness, applauding loudly and happily saying, "Congratulations, Young Master, for attaining a breakthrough once again, and reaching the stage of launching ten shots with one look for the Dragon Slaying Archery! There's a chance for you to clinch first in the upcoming inter-class competition."

Renault was practicing the Dragon Slaying Archery, a horrifying Killing technique which controlled arrows like a magnetic field with high speed continuous shots as the foundation, tapping on the natural reactive effects that the ether particles had on each other.

"I'm still a little bit off from those at the top spots, Class 248's Hamil and Class 249's Ralph, the strongest Knights in the academy, aren't that easy to deal with." Renault smiled, showing a confident look like never before. "But there's no doubt that I'll be able to deal with Fang Xingjian tomorrow. His defence is too weak. So what if he has great speed?

"Is he faster than my arrow?

"With my 'Eye of the Mighty Hawk', it's impossible for him to dodge my shots.

"Moreover, I've seen all of his movements today.

"He cannot escape my sight with his speed."

Eye of the Mighty Hawk was a speciality Renault had trained to attain in order to power up his archery. From the name alone, it was obvious that it would increase his visual abilities.

Chapter 89 Lilia

Not long after Robert left, another visitor dropped by Fang Xingjian's villa.

In the training room, Fang Xingjian was cultivating the new Nurturing techniques he had learnt. Their class's competition was scheduled for the afternoon, so he was still making full use of this time to train.

It was then when loud sounds started coming from outside the villa.

Fang Xingjian stopped swinging his sword, frowning as he looked in the direction of the noise. The next moment, a loud piercing scream rang out with a deafening bang. A maid was screaming

Fang Xingjian's expression turned grim, and he dashed out with a strong gust of wind in a flash.

In the courtyard, a short figure with a height of about 1.6 meters slowly walked over to him. The metal gate outside the courtyard was twisted on the ground, obviously smashed open with brute force.

A middle-aged maid shouted out in surprise, "You... you cannot come in! The Headmaster instructed that no one is to disrupt the Lord's training."

The human figure impatiently said, "My father asked me to come. If not, do you think I'd even want to be here?"

"Where is Fang Xingjian? I've come to bring him Knight's remains."

That figure bellowed out as loud as thunder, and in the blink of an eye, her voice had spread throughout the whole villa.

Fang Xingjian frowned amidst the strong gales. He looked at the smashed gate, and at the shocked maid who had dropped to the

floor, then coldly asked, "Who are you? Why did you barge into my place?"

But he noticed that the figure seemed to be a little surprised.

It was a young girl with a height of about 1.6 meters. Looking at her face alone, with a ponytail and a neat row of bangs, she was extremely delicate, just like a pure high school girl.

But the girl's body made her appeared to be very strong. Her pair of long slender legs reached the height of an average girl's waist, her arms slightly bulging muscles, looking strong but not overly muscular. She held a gigantic sword about 1.5 meters in length, which would occasionally touch the ground casually. She gave off a strong impression of a person brimming with strength.

And at the same time a slight contradiction between her equally elegant and empowered look.

This young girl was very pretty, but at the same time, slightly muscular. Fang Xingjian could not cast aside the contradictory feeling he got.

Hearing Fang Xingjian's question, the young girl pouted and asked, "You're Fang Xingjian?"

"I'm Kirst's City Lord's daughter, Lilia. My father got me to bring you this set of Knight's remains."

With that, without any restraint, she magnificently threw a bag towards Fang Xingjian. The latter casually caught it, and found two bits of arm bones which were white as jade inside the ragged felt pouch.

Although they had the shape of bones, the two looked like beautiful pure white jade, also giving off a gentle aura. When Fang Xingjian grabbed them, he even felt a strong cold air flowing from them, as the temperature around him seemed to drop slightly.

One could tell with one look that these were no ordinary items, but the remains of a Conferred Knight.

And just as Fang Xingjian lowered his head to look at the remains, Lilia let out a loud thunder-like roar, the 1.5 meter long huge sword in her hand suddenly spouted sound waves of wind and thunder. With a leap, she slashed down fiercely.

Fang Xingjian did not move at all. Even the hand which he had just used to receive the remains did not even tremble. With a slight flash of his right hand, as if lightning had appeared out of nowhere, he blinded everyone there, making them subconsciously close their eyes. After a loud boom, Lilia cried out in pain. She had been sent flying, only managing to come to a stop after she had tumbled over ten times.

All the servants in the surroundings looked towards Fang Xingjian, only to discover that he had not moved an inch. His longsword was back into its sheath, making them wonder if he had even drawn his sword in the first place.

An ignorant villager would have considered this quick attack to be demonic powers or magic.

Lilia struggled up to her feet and stretched out her muscles a bit, looking just fine. Her eyes, fixed on Fang Xingjian, were brimming with light.

Fang Xingjian was secretly a bit surprised as well. He had intended to knock her out with that attack. To think that she had not just gotten back up to her feet, but at the same time, other than a slight disruption to her vital energy and blood, she seemed to be perfectly fine.

Lilia's body seemed to be as strong as that of a ferocious beast's.

"Alright!" Lilia let out a maniacal laughter, picking up her huge sword, and charged forth once again. "Here I come again!"

The two swords clashed once again at a speed which the naked eye could not follow, and Lilia flew out once again. However, just as she was about to dash forward once again, she felt something

cold at her neck. Unknowingly, Fang Xingjian had already appeared beside her, the longsword in his hand closely stuck to her neck.

"Your persistence is getting out of hand."

However, when faced with Fang Xingjian's cold words, Lilia's face was filled with excitement as she said, "Master, please accept a bow from your disciple!"

Fang Xingjian looked at the young girl strangely, and she shouted, "Master! Your sword technique is really awesome! As expected of a super genius who is the first to become a Windstorm Sword Hero in fifty years."

Fang Xingjian turned to leave, "I don't take in disciples."

Lilia shouted, "I can pay you a tuition fee of one hundred gold each week!"

Fang Xingjian paused in his tracks, but once again moved on.

Lilia shouted again, "I'll present my father's remaining ten Wind Hawks to you as well!"

Ten Wind Hawks. They would probably be able to add on a bit of extra agility attribute to Fang Xingjian's current stats. Each of them was extremely rare. They were precious and valuable treasures which, despite there being people who were willing to pay high prices for them, most people were unable to get them.

Just as Fang Xingjian was considering if he should give some guidance to her sword arts, Lilia seemed to have thought of something and said, "Right, right, it's my dad who asked me to get you to give me some pointers for my sword arts. Master, I even have the Headmaster's approval right here!"

As she was saying this, she searched around and finally took out a piece of a crumpled letter. Fang Xingjian frowned and took it. It was really a letter from the Headmaster. There was even stamp of the Royal Knight Academy at the bottom.

In short, it was stated that Lilia was given the permission to enter the academy everyday and receive sword arts guidance from Fang Xingjian.

On the other hand, Lilia crossed her hands in front of her chest, looking at Fang Xingjian with great expectations. The way she lifted her head and looked at him with a pair of big round eyes, she looked like Fang Xingjian's younger sister, or a kitten waiting in anticipation for its master to feed it.

"Alright, I got it. From tomorrow onwards, you can come over in the morning. I'll give you guidance on your sword arts for an hour, daily."

"That's great!" Lilia jumped up, laughing out loud.

On the other hand, Fang Xingjian reminded, "Don't forget to bring your father's remaining ten Wind Hawks as well tomorrow."

Lilia patted her chest and said, "Don't worry, teacher. I'll bring them all tomorrow. My father loved those beasts a lot and hid them somewhere safe."

"But I know where they are hidden."

"Don't worry and just leave it to me."

"Oh, right. You'll be participating in the competition this afternoon, right? I'll go cheer for you!"

Looking at the excited young lady, Fang Xingjian's brows furrowed even more. He did not wish to have such a noisy person shouting out loudly on the cliffs while looking at his competition.

Therefore, Fang Xingjian brushed her off casually, "No need. How about this. This afternoon, you can practice all of the sword techniques you have learnt and show them to me tomorrow. Treat it as a test."

Once he brushed off the young girl, he realized it was already noon. After he finished lunch, Jack and Anthony had already

come.

Jack said, slightly agitated and yet worried at the same time, "Let's head to the competition together. So how is it, Xingjian?"

"I heard that Renault is a nemesis to those who specialize in speed. Are you confident that you'll defeat him?"

Anthony patted Jack on the shoulder and said, "Don't put too much pressure on Xingjian. At least we've already won one round. Class 252 is even stronger than Class 253. We just need to do our best."

Fang Xingjian shook his head and coldly replied, "Since coming here, I've never once thought of losing."

Leaving the two staring at each other, speechless, Fang Xingjian headed for the location of the competition. He did the same thing again and carried in a big basket of metal swords on his back.

Chapter 90 Start of the Match

In the valley where the competition was being held, the number of spectators on the cliffs were now several times more than the day before. The originally cold and cheerless mountain was filled with all kinds of people.

Evidently, news of Fang Xingjian having single-handedly defeated ten Knights of the first transition had widely spread, and it had attracted much commotion in KIRST. Countless aristocrats, students, or strong Warriors from major factions with connections had all come to spectate today. They all wanted to see whether the legendary Windstorm Sword Hero was as powerful as the rumors said.

Jack and Anthony followed Fang Xingjian into the battlefield, standing in front of the fort. They stared towards the silhouettes on the cliffs who were moving unceasingly, and sighed, "So many people came."

Jack was somewhat nervous as he spoke, "It appears that the aristocrats in the area as well as Elders from various factions, and even headmasters and sect masters also came."

Anthony laughed, "Look, Hogan has brought everyone from your City Guard Institution here as well."

On a cliff far away in the distance, Hogan and ten other soldiers were occupying an empty space. His head of red hair fluttered in the wind as he revealed an excited smile, turning his gaze towards the battlefield, "Interesting, interesting. Windstorm Sword Hero against Soulseeker Archer. Is the sword faster or is the arrow even faster?"

Amongst those at the back, Eldest Martial Brother Ogden was staring at a few other comrades, saying, "Let me tell you guys about this. Back in The School of Sword Arts, I was the one who gave Fang Xingjian guidance for his basic sword techniques. Back

then, he had to refer me as Eldest Martial Brother.”

Evidently, after learning that Fang Xingjian had successfully transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, defeated Kaunitz, and had even single-handedly defeated over ten first transitioned Knights, Ogden changed his strategy once again and started bragging to his colleagues about his relationship with Fang Xingjian.

“Is that really true?” a person said in disbelief. “I heard that he only stayed in The School of Sword Arts for an extremely short period of time, and that he didn’t really interact with others.”

Ogden hurriedly replied, “What do you know? Although that Fang chap didn’t like to speak, he still liked sword arts. Considering how long I’ve been in The School of Sword Arts, I was already exceptionally proficient with their basic sword techniques. Let me tell you, back then when I was guiding him on his sword techniques, he wouldn’t even dare to rebut me in the slightest when I scolded him. That was because he knew how strong my basic sword techniques were.

“Stop boasting,” Someone laughed, “You think we don’t know how much you’re worth? If you’re really so familiar with him, do you dare to have bet with me? You’ll bet on Fang Xingjian’s victory for this round.

“Sigh.” Ogden appeared rational as he analyzed, “Although this junior of mine has extraordinary talent and he’s an amazing sword genius, he hasn’t been cultivating for that long. Especially considering how the job Souseeker Archer works best in countering high speed opponents, it’ll be quite hard for him to win this round.”

...

On another cliff, the Tresia Clan’s clan head was sitting on top of a huge chair. Beside him was Rebecca, as well as a few others who belonged to the higher echelons of the clan. Behind them were

another twenty or more students of the Tresia Academy.

With a bitter look on his face, the Tresia Clan's clan head said, "I've brought all of you here to spectate this battle, so that you can have a look at the Knights who are at the pinnacle of Tresia. You'll have to learn well from them, work harder, and try hard to become official Knights as soon as possible.

"Especially for you to witness Fang Xingjian's outstanding talent. He was able to defeat ten Knights despite having only been transitioned for a single month. This is truly utterly startling.

"This person will definitely become a sword master of his generation in the future. All of you must have to observe his movements attentively. It would be considered a blessing no matter how much you can learn from him."

The students all lowered their heads and assented. Vivian was within them, looking towards where Fang Xingjian and the others were at. A complicated expression could be seen on her face.

A while back, she was also learning in The School of Sword Arts. It had not even been a year, yet their status was as far apart as heaven from earth. Fang Xingjian had reached a place where she could only look up to from now on.

Recently, Kaunitz's treatment towards her had gotten colder and colder, making her status in Tresia Academy undergo a rapid downslide. The regret in her heart was also unceasingly magnified.

Rebecca sat unperturbed on her chair, her eyes tightly shut, not speaking a word, as though she did not care about the competition at all.

She only glanced towards Fang Xingjian occasionally, concealing a strong smirk, as if she were looking at a fool.

"Windstorm Sword Hero? Hmph."

...

In a corner up on the cliff, Second Martial Brother Lambert had brought along six fellow disciples. As one of the Seven Pearls Academies, naturally, they had the privilege to spectate.

Lambert stroked his beard, looking much more mature than before. After leaving Kirst to participate in the Tournament of the Sword Heroes, Kyle passed the administration rights regarding The School of Sword Arts to Lambert. Evidently, Lambert had officially joined The School of Sword Arts and had become an inner disciple.

He pointed in Fang Xingjian's direction as he spoke, "That person over there, standing at the front, is Fang Xingjian. He came from our school." The tone of his words were filled with pride. "As long as all of you put in effort in practicing the sword, in the future, you may be able to become a Knight just like him."

The youngest among the six students was only about seven to eight years old, while the oldest was at most fourteen. Upon hearing Lambert's words, their gazes filled with anticipation and worship as they stared at Fang Xingjian. Then, they all replied as one, "Yes, Martial Brother."

...

This time around, Class 256 was gathered in the fortress at the north end, while Class 252, which Renault and Xiu Yi belonged to, was gathered at the fortress located in the south end of the valley.

Gazing upon all the kinds of people standing on top the mountain cliff, Renault's lips curled upwards, unable to hold back his laughter, "Haha, defeating Fang Xingjian in front of so many people... Thinking about it... This feeling isn't bad at all.

"Xiu Yi. In the past, even if it was the finals, there weren't this many people spectating, right?"

"Of course not." Xiu Yi's left hand occasionally rubbed on the Ring of Lightning on his right hand. He wore an unfathomable look on his face, saying, "It's a pity that they're destined to be

unable to witness Fang Xingjian's radiance today."

Renault stared at him in surprise as he spoke, "How should we fight later, when the competition starts? I'm confident I can defeat Fang Xingjian, but I'm just afraid that he would bypass me and head straight to occupy our fortress."

"Fang Xingjian is only one person, he's the one who should be worrying." Xiu Yi laughed and said, "Let's split into two groups later. You'll stay here to take advantage of the favourable location, and I'll take four men to fight Fang Xingjian."

He was worried in his heart that Renault might make his move too early and if Fang Xingjian was really done for, then wouldn't Renault have snatched his glory?

"Oh?" Renault smiled, "You seem really confident. So different from the usual you... But very well. Anyway, I alone am enough to defeat him, you can go ahead and play with him first."

Just as the two were discussing their strategies, a fire beacon soared upwards from the Canyon. The competition had started.

An expression of excitement spread on Renault's face as he spoke, "Help me out, I want to send my greetings to them first."

Two Knights propped up Renault's feet. He squatted ferociously, and as the muscles on his legs swelled up, he leapt up into the air like a frog. Under the powerful counteracting force, the two Knights who were supporting Renault tumbled backwards as the latter shot up to a height of over ten meters into the air, like a cannonball.

Preparing his bow and nocking his arrows, he locked his eyes on Fang Xingjian, who was about a thousand meters away, on the other end of the valley.

Renault laughed lightly, saying, "Hello there, Fang Xingjian."

The next moment, five arrows slashed through the air with piercing shrills, as they flew at an explosive speed towards Fang

Xingjian, just like shooting stars.

Chapter 91 The Burst

Five arrows shot out at the same time, and terrifying shrieks filled the whole valley.

At the same time when everyone heard the piercing shrieks, the five arrows had already cut across almost half the distance.

Fang Xingjian's pupils slightly contracted, his High Agility Motion Vision activating at full power, and his ears trembling slightly, taking in all the tremor waves in the air and confirming the arrows' location and speed.

The next moment, five arrows slashed through the air in a beautiful arch, arriving before Fang Xingjian, as if they would pierce through him in the next instance and pin him to the ground.

But just then, Fang Xingjian's right hand moved. Everyone could only see his right hand disappearing then appearing again, gently tossing the shattered longsword in his hand onto the ground, but no one had been able to see what he did with his right hand from beginning to end.

At the same time, five rays of sword light flashed across in the air, just like five streaks of lightning slashing through space, making the white sword Qis of compressed air soar into the skies, only dissipating after rising tens of meters into the air.

And the five arrows Renault shot out were turned into powder. No one could tell whether Fang Xingjian had crushed them with his sword or with his sword Qis.

At that moment, Renault was still descending. The whole process had happened too quickly. So fast that most of the people had not managed to react to what had happened.

Without sparing a look for the powdered arrows, Fang Xingjian's gaze seemed to cut through layers of space, aligning directly with Renault's.

A hint of a smile appeared on the corners of Fang Xingjian's lips. The Knight attire he was wearing tightened up, and no one knew when, but another longsword had appeared in his hand. The longsword swept across, making the air currents tremble, and sending plants and trees flying, as tens of sword Qis encompassed his body.

With a loud bang, the basket on Fang Xingjian's back shattered, fifty metal swords soaring into the sky like swimming dragons, each of them encompassed by a stream of sword Qi that burst forth together with Fang Xingjian, making it seem as if he was riding the wind and his swords.

With the activation of the Supreme Mistwind Sword, the control his swords and Qis had over each other had been set into motion. His Single Sword World Subjugation specialty had always been activated ever since he had first held the sword.

Stepping forward, he appeared hundreds of meters away in but a flash.

Renault's expression turned grim, and as he landed, he said, "Be careful, he has dashed over alone." Shooting the five arrows from such a distance, he knew that with Fang Xingjian's abilities, he would definitely be able to fend them off. However, Renault would never have thought that Fang Xingjian would be able to break through them so easily, so casually.

It was then that Renault suddenly realized that he had underestimated Fang Xingjian's abilities. When the other party had been up against Class 253 the day before, it was likely that he had not brought out his full powers.

But as he stroked the Sacred Bow in his hands, his confidence soared yet again.

'It's alright. As long as I can shoot him down before he comes to me, it'll be fine.'

A confident smile appeared on his face, as he indifferently said, "Xiu Yi, you go stop him at the grassland two hundred meters away. I'll shoot him down from the fortress.

"Within a distance of two hundred meters, it'll be impossible for him to dodge."

Xiu Yi's brows furrowed. Earlier, he had been on the ground, and had obviously not seen the moment when Fang Xingjian fended off the five arrows in a mere instant. He could not understand Renault's abruptly serious tone.

Of course, most importantly, he did not wish to work together with Renault to defeat Fang Xingjian.

Working together to defeat a Knight who had just transitioned one month before, even if said opponent was a Windstorm Sword Hero, was not a glorious act.

However, defeating the opponent alone, especially since the other party had recently defeated ten Knights single-handedly, would truly be a glorious act.

Therefore, Xiu Yi shook his head and said, "I alone will be enough." With that, he took a step forward, not towards the grassland in front of the fortress, but towards the forest.

Compared to the open grassland, the forest was filled with obstructions, and Renault's archery skills and options would be significantly limited.

"You!" Renault did not expect that Xiu Yi, who had been suppressed by him all this while, would suddenly say something like this. His eyes narrowed, and he looked at Xiu Yi, saying, "What is the meaning of this?"

As he said that, he once again drew his Sacred Bow, but his arrow was aimed at Xiu Yi's back.

"Didn't you hear what I said?"

"I told you to head to the grassland to stop him."

Locked on by the bow and arrow, Xiu Yi stopped in his tracks, his brows tightly knitted, "Why?"

"You want to kill me?"

"Then you can go ahead and try, see if it's effective."

Within ten meters of Xiu Yi, the Waves in the air turned erratic, layers of something invisible like glass gradually appearing in Xiu Yi's Reduced Force Field, as if layers of invisible armor were encompassing him.

In Class 252, Renault's role and transition job was Soualseeker Archer, and he had learnt the Killing technique – Dragon Slaying Archery.

Xiu Yi's transition job was Warfare Fortress, and he knew the Killing technique – Steel Domain, which focused on defence.

Their battle plan had always been Xiu Yi at the forefront, and Renault hiding at the back, shooting fanatically. It was also because Renault had a domineering personality, and given his status as a Prefectural Champion, he had always been suppressing Xiu Yi as Class 252's leader.

Now, layers of force field shield created from the combination of Reduced Force Field and ether particles had compassed Xiu Yi's body. Ten layers of force field shields appeared before Reduced Force Field, making Renault turn even more grim.

He did not know why Xiu Yi, who had always appeared as inferior before him, would suddenly be so headstrong.

Even with his Sacred Bow and Dragon Slaying Archery, it would be an extremely troublesome task for him to break through Xiu Yi's force field shield within a short amount of time.

"Go to the grassland, Xiu Yi." Renault's voice exuded chills. "If I lose this match because of your blunder, I'll pin you to the ground

one arrow at a time."

Seeing the two drawing their sword and bow against each other, the remaining eight Knights all felt anxious and worried. However, regardless of whether it was Xiu Yi or Renault, both were much too powerful, and none of them would dare to step in and stop them at this point.

After a period of silence, Xiu Yi still moved forward, heading in the direction of the forest.

With the Ring of Lightning, he had full confidence that he would be able to win. Why would let go of the chance of to defeat Fang Xingjian all by himself?

Cold light gleamed in Renault's eyes, but he did not release his arrows in the end.

"Alright, alright, alright. I'll defeat Fang Xingjian alone. Xiu Yi, we'll leave our problem for after the competition."

"No need.

"Let me help you guys settle this."

Just as Renault finished saying his words, another male voice rang out. They saw Fang Xingjian's body encompassed by countless milky white sword Qis of compressed air, which continuously put pressure on the surrounding atmosphere.

Encompassed by these sword Qis, Fang Xingjian's Supreme Mistwind Sword was circulating to its limits, increasing his speed three times more than usual. He became like a prehistoric tyrannosaurus, yet also like the Windstorm Spiritual God of ancient times, charging into Class 252's team.

Behind Fang Xingjian, fifty black metallic longswords connected into one, as if a gigantic black dragon was slicing the wind alongside him, amidst the raging shrieks of the wind.

Sword winds blew, sword Qis rushed, and in the short moment

he had burst forward, up to a hundred sword Qis all followed the edge of Fang Xingjian's sword, shooting off in all directions, surrounding every single person in Class 252, and catching them by surprise.

Chapter 92 Quick Sword VS Quick Arrow

Just as his sword Qis blasted out, Fang Xingjian himself was like a bomb, relying on the Supreme Mistwind Sword, and charging into the opponents at an extreme speed about three times his usual speed.

His legs stomped down heavily on the ground, his raging strength like two waves of impact, blasting two big craters in the ground and making waves of air currents surge out in all directions from where his feet met the ground.

Plants, trees, dirt and sand were sent flying. Before Fang Xingjian, a Knight was staring with eyes wide open, looking at the direction he had just come from. The Knight's gaze still reflected a blurred afterimage of a person's silhouette. It was Fang Xingjian's silhouette.

Sword light flashed about, the plants and trees in the air still dropping one by one. The pupils of the people in the surroundings slightly contracted, their faces twitching, their hands reaching out closer and closer towards their weapons.

But the sword light from Fang Xingjian's sword had already brushed across the Knight's chest softly like lightning, and in the next three seconds, countless sword Qis made the Knight's chest explode, as he was sent flying and spewing blood. In his gaze, a blurred shaky black shadow was still reflected, alongside that sword light which had slashed through the sky.

Ba-boom!

Fang Xingjian once again exerted force on his legs, the longsword in his hands shattering into pieces. He casually grabbed another from behind him, the fifty metallic swords now standing in the sky one less.

With a tremble of his longsword, a hurricane of sword Qis

formed, and as Fang Xingjian's silhouette flashed about and disappeared, a long stream of air current took form.

Within the short moment in which Fang Xingjian changed his form, a total of seven arrows pierced through the afterimages he left behind, landing onto the ground.

Renault's eyes contracted so much that they appeared to be like needle tips, his hands shaking as if he was convulsing, creating a series of afterimages. The Sacred Bow let out a series of cries, a melody resonating from the bow and bowstring.

He seemed to be the only one out of the ten who could keep up with Fang Xingjian's movements, and even attack.

But even if that was the case, he was still a notch slower, and could only helplessly look at how Fang Xingjian changed his form before the arrows were even shot.

However, the next moment, he focused like never before. With the sight seen through the 'Eye of the Mighty Hawk', the silhouette entirely encompassed by sword Qis had already spurred forth towards him.

The muscles throughout his body tightened in that instance, and Renault's hand seemed to have completely disappeared at that moment. He simply watched the arrows in his quiver disappearing one by one.

60 points in strength and 80 points in agility had been released explosively, all at once.

His speed could not keep up with Fang Xingjian's at all, but at least it could still, albeit barely, keep up with the Fang Xingjian who had yet to activate his Boundaries Negation.

At the same time, the ether particles in the surrounding space all seemed to be boiling, aiming at Fang Xingjian through Renault's consciousness, as if they were magnetic tracks.

The bowstring trembled, and arrows were launched, each of

them cutting through space, unceasingly accelerating on the tracks formed by the ether particles, their destination – Fang Xingjian's body.

With three loud sounds, the sword and arrows clashed, the three arrows broke into pieces. Fang Xingjian's longsword also shattered.

Fang Xingjian changed his sword, taking a step back. Loud whistling sounds came from the air currents, the longbow making low screeches, and the longsword once again shattered.

All these arrows locked and accelerated by the ether particles looked as if they had eyes, chasing after Fang Xingjian. Unless he hit them down with his longsword, they would not stop.

This was the ultimate move in the Killing technique – Dragon Slaying Archery – Homing Arrows.

But every time he knocked down two or three arrows, Fang Xingjian's longsword would shatter.

And Renault's hands did not stop, his eyes in a daze, arrows flying out like a waterfall, each of them cutting across the sky in a beautiful arch, chasing after Fang Xingjian.

Fang Xingjian focused his gaze, deciding to ignore the Homing Arrows following him, and dashed behind another Knight.

"Be careful!"

"All of you, get out of the way!"

"He's here!"

"Help!"

"He's here, he's here!"

Amidst surprised cries, piercing screams, and angered bellows, Class 252's team turned into a huge mess. Fang Xingjian was like a breeze, bringing along over forty longswords as he shuttled among them. And then the Knights fell, one by one.

Some of them were pierced by Renault's arrows, while others were casually knocked out by Fang Xingjian.

Everywhere he passed by, air would explode in crackling sounds. It was caused by the Knights displaying their Reduced Force Fields in an attempt to capture Fang Xingjian. It was a pity, but their reactions could not match Fang Xingjian's speed in the least, resulting in them only being able to crush the air with loud sounds.

And only after all eight Knights were knocked out did Xiu Yi, who had earlier run towards the forest, return with heavy footsteps to stand before Renault.

His eyes were filled with astonishment. The blurred silhouette was like the raging wind, and as streams of sword Qis shot out, he was completely unable to see Fang Xingjian's movements clearly.

Fang Xing, who had unleashed the full prowess of the Supreme Mistwind Sword wind, was much faster than when he had fought against Claude, the day before.

Renault's face was filled with killing intent. Looking at the eight Knights on the ground, his bow was stretched out like a full moon, and not even knowing when, he had drawn from his quiver an arrow flashing with bits of ice crystals.

His eyes were fixed on Fang Xingjian, the arrow aimed at the latter's head, while Fang Xingjian himself leaped around in the grassland, shuttling around, creating rays of sword Qis to slash through all the Homing Arrows behind him.

It was a pity that Renault had shot out over one hundred Homing Arrows, and it was not something which Fang Xingjian could deal with in a short moment.

Looking at the arrows which were close on his tracks, like hunting dogs, Fang Xingjian let out a cold snort, slashing with his longsword once again, and creating countless sword Qis, leading strong gales while he was midair. With a turn, he was already

dashing towards Renault.

‘Is he coming?’

Renault aimed his longbow and arrow towards Fang Xingjian, who was dashing towards him in a straight line. He did not dare to wait or relax. This launched arrow was his supersonic archery unleashed at his full powers, Formless Shot.

The veins on Renault's forehead swelled, Waves boiling through his body, and between heaven and earth, formless tracks created from ether particles crept outwards, locking onto Fang Xingjian.

The whole process sounded very slow, but Renault had practiced it tens of thousands of times, and his actions were so fluid that they seemed to be as fast as lightning. Just as Fang Xingjian turned and dashed towards him, the Formless Shot was successfully launched.

The bowstring trembled fiercely, and the sharp arrow cut through the sky.

The ice-blue arrow on the bow was a one-time use Empire's Divine Weapon, which was sufficient to make the target experience an abrupt temperature drop, down to negative fifty degrees celsius.

‘Once it hits, Fang Xingjian will definitely lose.

‘And those at their first transition or lower could only attempt to try receiving my Formless Shot head on, but will definitely be unable to dodge it.’

But just as various thoughts flashed across his mind, the moment just before the arrow was launched, Fang Xingjian's body did the impossible and accelerated once again, exiting Renault's line of vision.

A horrifying technique which transcended physical and material boundaries, the Boundaries Negation was activated, and Fang Xingjian's speed multiplied abruptly once again.

In an instant, the surrounding air turned extremely viscous. Each step he took created terrifying air explosions, and each sword Qi was accompanied by terrifying sound explosions, making the entire sword screech, as if it would shatter into tens of thousands of pieces the very next moment.

Supersonic human vs supersonic arrow.

Renault's Eye of the Mighty Hawk was no longer able to see Fang Xingjian's body, and just before he reacted, he felt an excruciating pain in his chest, a thunderous sonic explosive sound ringing out from all over his body as he was sent flying.

His Formless Shot fell a distance of over hundreds of meters away, passing by countless big trees and eventually piercing deeply into the cliff wall.

It was only when the crowd heard the explosive sound that they managed to react to the lightning-fast speed of the sword.

"Supersonic!"

"Achieving supersonic at level 10 of the first transition?"

"What joke is this?"

"Windstorm Sword Hero... Is it really that strong?"

"Report this immediately... A genius who exceeded the speed of sound at the age of sixteen..."

At that moment, countless people at the top of the cliffs had the same thought, their eyes brimming with extreme astonishment, and looking at Fang Xingjian as if they were looking at a monster among monsters.

Chapter 93 Victory

Huang Lin exhaled. Despite having undergone actual combat practice with Fang Xingjian almost everyday, and despite knowing very well how fast the other party's progress was...

He had already tried his best to overestimate Fang Xingjian's abilities. But seeing Fang Xingjian display a move which transcended the speed of sound, his eyes were still full of shock.

Transcending the speed of sound was a top notch ability. 80% of the Conferred Knights would be able to achieve this, and a minority of the Knights at the first transition would be able to achieve this state for a short amount of time, along with some of the top instructors in the academy.

But how old were they? For how many years had they been training for?

How long had Fang Xingjian been training for?

Having transitioned slightly more than a month ago, to think that he could already breakthrough the speed of sound physically! What terrifying talent he had...

Huang Lin exchanged a glance with Headmaster Jackson. Amidst their feelings of joy and admiration, unknowingly, a tinge of terror seemed to cloud the back of their eyes.

This student of theirs seemed to be slightly too awesome.

...

Just as Renault had been sent flying, while Fang Xingjian was gently landing, Kirst's City Lord abruptly stood up. The chair had shattered and turned into dust under him, showing how shocked he was by what he had just seen.

"Supersonic speed?"

"At only sixteen years of age?"

He turned to the servant beside him and asked, "Have the other Windstorm Sword Heroes in past history been this strong as well?"

"After the other three had transitioned into Windstorm Sword Heroes, once they came across enemies of the same level, there was no battle they didn't win, nor did their attacks not reach their targets. But as for how fast they were, I'm not very sure."

Kirst's City Lord fell deep in thought before he finally said, "Get me some pen and paper."

As a Conferred Knight and also the head of a clan, Kirst's City Lord's abilities, naturally, were also above the speed of sound. However, how long had he trained before reaching this level?

He remembered only being able to physically break through the barriers of sound after six long years of training, once he had completed his first transition. How long had it been for Fang Xingjian?

He quickly wrote down a long list, all materials he had accumulated these past years with the scope of forging a Divine Weapon.

He passed the list of materials to the servant and said, "Later, take my token and head back to my residence to gather all these materials. Tomorrow, send them to Fang Xingjian as Lilia's gift for Fang Xingjian taking her in as his disciple."

The servant calmly received the list, taking his leave. The other servants had long cleaned up the place and brought another chair for Kirst's City Lord to sit on.

Although Xiu Yi was the last person standing of Class 252's members, Kirst's City Lord's thoughts were no longer on the competition.

The ingredients he had initially gathered no longer had much use, since the bone remains had already been given away. Earlier, seeing Fang Xingjian's astonishing performance, he had planned

right away to find a reason to give these to him, thus strengthening their relationship.

There was no other reason.

Transcending the speed of sound at the age of sixteen, and doing so just one month after completing his transition... Such a young man truly had an unfathomable future awaiting him.

"His abilities are probably already ranked amongst the top five out of all the students. Give it another one to two years, and Kirst will probably be unable to keep him anymore."

In the whole Knight Academy, the strongest were obviously the two Conferred Knights, Headmaster and Huang Lin. The other Knights, who were at their first transition, were also split into different levels.

The senior instructors who had been cultivating for decades were considered the strongest batch.

Following these were the geniuses, and other ordinary instructors who had been transitioned for seven to eight years now.

People like Renault and Claude, talented students who had only been transitioned for a short period of time, as well as the senior students who had transitioned for seven to eight years were next.

After them followed the ordinary students who had been training for three to four years.

Finally, the weakest batch were those Knights who had transitioned at some point in the last two years.

Moreover, those on the same level also had different abilities.

But no matter how it was, how long had it been since Fang Xingjian had started training?

The abilities he displayed could already be compared with those of the geniuses who had cultivated for seven to eight years, part of

the second group.

In the competition that was to follow, even if his class lost to the classes who had been cultivating for seven to eight years due to the difference between the number of years spent training, Fang Xingjian's individual performance was already impeccable.

Many people felt that it was no longer possible for Fang Xingjian to defeat the two strongest classes after this. After all, no matter how strong Fang Xingjian was, he was just a single person. How many senior Knights would he have to go up against?

But even so, this did not tarnish their evaluation of Fang Xingjian, as his talent was truly too awesome.

Sighs echoed, seemingly echoing the countless thoughts of those on top of the cliffs.

...

Vivian looked around, at a loss. Those usually haughty Elders, instructors, teachers and Knights were all revealing looks of astonishment, unceasingly discussing amongst themselves.

However, she could simply not understand what had just happened.

She had only been able to see blurred images of flashing sword lights, and strong blowing gales, mixed together with blurred silhouettes. There was no way she have seen the battles clearly at all. After everything had gone silent, she could only see all eight Knights knocked out unconscious on the ground, and Renault spewing blood and falling, leaving only Xiu Yi standing there alone, at a loss.

'What is going on?

'Why did it end just like this?

'Are those Knights all useless bums?

'Losing just like that?

'What on earth are all of you being so shocked about?!

But no matter how loudly she screamed out in her heart, it was useless. This was strength, this was power. The weak did not even have the ability to know the truth.

They seemed to be living in the same world as the strong, but they lived in different dimensions.

On the front row of the Tresia Clan members, the clan head's countenance turned increasingly grim, as if countless sorrows and troubles were coagulating in his heart. Beside him, Rebecca was staring hard with eyes wide-opened, her gaze filled with malice and viciousness.

'This little b*stard...'

The next moment, her eyes were fixed on Xiu Yi, as if waiting for some kind of miracle to happen.

On the competition field, Xiu Yi was holding onto his sword with both hands, expanding his Steel Domain outwards, while countless force field shields floated before him. Coupled with the Knight attire he was wearing, Xiu Yi's defence was considered top notch amongst those in the first transition.

But even so, it was a far cry from giving him any sense of security.

The Fang Xingjian before him was encompassed by whirlwinds and sword Qis which held him one inch off the ground, as he looked at him coldly, like a Windstorm Spiritual God.

His techniques, specialities, attributes, equipment, all appeared to be extremely weak when faced with the other party's extreme speed.

He could only console himself in his heart.

'It's fine, I have the Ring of Lightning.

'I have already activated the ring. As long as his longsword comes

into contact with mine or slashes my Knight attire...

'As long as I win over the current him...

Xiu Yi looked at the fallen Knights, and looked at Renault, who had been sent flying and had been unable to get up ever since. His eyes flashed with a burning gleam.

'As long as I win over him...'

"Hey," Fang Xingjian suddenly asked Xiu Yi, "Are you from the Tresia Clan?"

Xiu Yi was dumbfounded, but he immediately nodded and said, "That's right, I'm Kaunitz's Martial Senior. Fang Xingjian, you've caused humiliation to Tresia. Today, I'll..."

It was a pity that Fang Xingjian did not hear him out. After hearing that the other party was from Tresia Academy, he had already lost interest in him.

That was because in the earlier battle of extreme speed, even Fang Xingjian had been unable to hold back in time, and had knocked out the eight Knights from Class 252 straight away. This had made him unable to pick up sword techniques from them.

And this Knight was from Tresia Knight Academy... He had long stolen all of Tresia Knight Academy's Nurturing techniques from Kaunitz and Zhou Yong.

Therefore, this metal can before him was hard and thick, and entirely unattractive for him.

Therefore, he did not let Xiu Yi finish his words, nor did he bother to take another look at him. With a flash of his silhouette, strong gales stirred up, and he turned into a tornado, dashing into the fortress.

Taking over the opponent's fortress determined the winner of the inter-class competition.

And how was it possible for Xiu Yi to catch up to Fang Xingjian?

Therefore, he could only watch as Fang Xingjian dashed into the fortress, and could only watch as the referee announced Class 256's victory.

What truly made his heart bleed was the crowd's reaction.

"Tsk, he's not going to wipe out the last remaining Knight while he's at it?"

"Why let him go?"

"Could it be that this fellow knows Fang Xingjian?"

"Oh, Fang Xingjian let that Knight off?" Lambert from The School of Sword Arts shrugged and said, "That Knight should count himself lucky. An attack which transcends sound... Just the thought of it hurts."

On the cliffs, the City Guards Institution's Hogan shook his head, smiling, "Xiu Yi's luck is good." He was also considered the academy's instructor, and could, of course, recognize the students.

Amongst the City Guards Institution's members, Ogden analyzed, "This is called giving face. No matter what, Tresia is a reputable clan in Kirst, and although Fang Xingjian is very strong, he will still need to show them some face. That's why he let the last remaining Knight off.

"Let me tell you, the knack to this is very profound..."

Tresia's clan head's countenance appeared better now. He now had no choice but to consider whether Fang Xingjian had the intention of mitigating his relationship with them.

On the other hand, Rebecca was so furious that her face was flushed red. She abruptly stood up, flipped the table to the side and left.

"Useless bums!

"A bunch of useless bums!"

In the field, Xiu Yi was also feeling extremely gloomy for having

lost without a fight. He would rather Fang Xingjian defeated him than leaving it like this.

Even if he said that, even if he explained that he had the confidence to defeat Fang Xingjian, no one would believe him.

This feeling was so horrible that he wanted to spew blood.

"Fang Xingjian!

"Come back here!"

Of course, his furious bellow was once again treated as the cry of a loser.

Chapter 94 Giving Guidance

Just like that, Fang Xingjian's class won two consecutive battles, accumulating 6 points in the group battle, tied with Class 248 (the most senior class, who had trained for eight years longer than Class 256), and Class 250 (enrolled six years earlier than Class 256).

Therefore, based on the time that they had used, and on the number of members eliminated during battle, Fang Xingjian's Class 256 and Class 248 (the most senior class, who had trained for eight years longer than Class 256) were chosen as the two classes to directly enter the semi-finals.

Thereafter, the classes ranked third to sixth, namely Class 250, Class 252 (Xiu Yi's and Renault's class), Class 249 (the second most senior class), and Class 254, all continued their battles in the elimination rounds after drawing lots.

The remaining three classes, with the lowest accumulated point totals, were eliminated immediately after the first stage.

Therefore, for the next two days, Class 256 did not need to take part in any battles. They only needed to wait for the elimination rounds to conclude, and would be able to enter the semi-finals for the top four classes directly.

In the days without any battles, Fang Xingjian kept practicing his sword arts in his own villa, of course... there were a few more others in these two days.

...

On the lawn, Fang Xingjian sat cross-legged on the floor, physically circulating the Training techniques, and the Nurturing techniques, automatic as usual, while in his mind he unceasingly practiced a few of the Nurturing techniques he had secretly learnt these past few days.

However, he would quickly glance over at that silhouette on the

lawn every now and then.

Still, most of his focus was not on it. It was because the other party's sword techniques were too unbearably coarse. Even The School of Sword Arts' Ogden and Lambert were of a much higher level in terms of sword arts when compared to that young girl.

The one practicing her sword arts on the lawn was Kirst's City Lord's daughter, Lilia.

Today, after bringing along a whole cart of precious materials, she had started demonstrating her sword techniques under Fang Xingjian's command.

Today, her attitude towards Fang Xingjian was much more respectful than it had been the day before. She had obviously heard of how Fang Xingjian had not only wiped out all of the Knights in Class 252 the day before, but had even displayed sword techniques at the speed of sound, astonishing the crowd.

Therefore, Lilia was now waving her greatsword about in the air, sending soil and dust flying, shooting about grass and stones, and making a mess of the nice lawn.

After a very long time, she ran excitedly to Fang Xingjian, bowed respectfully, and asked in great anticipation, "Teacher, how do my sword arts look?"

"How should I be training from now on?"

Fang Xingjian narrowed his eyes and threw a glance at her. Most of his consciousness was still focused on automatically cultivating the Nurturing techniques that he had secretly learned, as he spoke.

"Trash."

"Ahh?!" Lilia pouted and said, "How's that possible?"

"The teacher my father got for me kept saying that I have great talent and that I am a genius for practicing martial arts. Usually, I'm very strong in fights as well!" As she said this, she clenched her

delicate little fists.

Fang Xingjian knew that her teacher was not wrong to say that. He did not know if it was due to the powerful bloodline of Kirst's City Lord, or if it was because Lilia had grown up eating too many treasures of the world, but her attributes were good, and she even had an inborn speciality called 'Monstrous Strength', allowing her strength to be maintained at its peak for as long as her physical strength was not depleted.

This was obviously an extremely outstanding speciality, ideally suited for combat, and it could generally allow Lilia to maintain peak condition during combat at all times. Normal injuries would not affect her either.

But this also made her perform each stance at full power, which ended up affecting her sword arts practice.

Of course, her talent in sword arts was really poor, and that was also why the levels of her techniques were all very low. She was thus unable to pass the selection to become a Knight, having been stuck at level 9 for a very long time, and even decided to pass up on opportunities for the Prefectural Selection these past few years.

But regardless of how things were, she was still a genius who had more than 35 points in strength, with a mere level of 9. In terms of attributes alone, she was stronger than Kaunitz had previously been.

Hearing Lilia's words, Fang Xingjian shook his head, and did not bother to argue with her. He directly grabbed her hand, and led her to display the Nurturing technique that she had performed earlier.

From Lilia's display of her sword technique, he had already picked up all four sets of Nurturing techniques that she practiced, and this was him only taking a few glimpses every now and then. It was obvious that Fang Xingjian's talent was growing increasingly terrifying as he became stronger.

Lilia was grabbed by the hand and led by Fang Xingjian to perform the sword techniques. Occasionally, Fang Xingjian would slap her on the back, on her shoulders, or push on her upper thigh, lower thigh, or limbs.

Her pose and channeling of energy were adjusted continuously, while Fang Xingjian simultaneously spoke in her ear, "This set of Nurturing technique is one of extreme yang, and is a top notch sword technique, which tempers the bones and boosts the blood flow, but because of this, it is very important for your stance to be exact.

"If not for consuming so much good food since you were young, at this rate, you would have long since experienced a deficiency of your vital energy and blood."

As he said these, Fang Xingjian continuously corrected Lilia's actions physically. After completing the sword technique set, Lilia's face was flushed red, her eyes swirling, thinking in her little brain, "What is going on? Why is it that when teacher instructs me in my sword practice, I feel so comfortable and so hot?"

But after looking at her Stats Window, she immediately became excited.

"This is so amazing! From just one practice with you, the experience I received is the same as when I practiced it twice in the past!" Lilia said excitedly. "Teacher, you're really awesome!"

"If it's effective, then go practice." Fang Xingjian once again sat down cross-legged, cultivating his own sword techniques, "Practice until I tell you to stop."

"Alright!" Saying that, Lilia acted as if she had been injected with chicken blood [1], cultivating her sword technique while exerting all of her strength.

With this, the 'Monstrous Strength' in her body exploded out once more, and the surrounding grass suffered even greater

damage.

And as Fang Xingjian provided guidance like this, he noticed that it actually levelled up his sword technique.

The Nurturing techniques he had secretly learnt during this time increased in experience as he guided Lilia.

And with the leveling of his Nurturing techniques, his Stats Window, which had been blurry for the past few days, suddenly became very clear again. Although he was still unable to see everything, he could tell that this speciality was formed of four words.

'This speciality... Does it require my level of sword arts to be higher?'

'Or do I have to pick up more sword techniques?'

'Or... Is it because I guided Lilia earlier?' Fang Xingjian thought to himself. 'I wonder what kind of speciality this is.'

While Fang Xingjian was deep in thought, Jack and Anthony came to the villa. Seeing Fang Xingjian sitting down cross-legged and cultivating, and Lilia fanatically waving her sword about on the lawn, they revealed hesitant expressions.

In the end, it was Jack who was the more thick-skinned of the two, so he said, "Xingjian, I heard that you were guiding this young lady in her sword training?"

"We've also known each other for very long. Can you also give us some guidance in our training? Although we do not practice sword arts, with regards to the Nurturing Path, there should be some common principles in terms of the nurturing of our bodies."

They had been simply astonished by Fang Xingjian in the past two matches, and thus had thought of learning from him. Even if it only had a 1% effect, it could already be considered a great improvement.

Looking at the duo's gazes, filled with anticipation, Fang Xingjian wanted to reject them outright. Jack and Anthony did not have the Headmaster's recommendation, nor did they have a wealthy father like the Kirst's City Lord, to present him with gifts.

But thinking of how, after he had previously given Lilia guidance his specialty had become a bit clearer, he paused for a while, eventually saying, "Then just join in."

[1] Injecting chicken blood, or chicken-blood therapy was a therapy popular in China in the 1960s, which consisted mainly of drawing blood from a rooster and injecting into the patient. There were claims that the benefits of doing so included the strengthening of one's constitution, increased lifespan, or even healing a myriad of illnesses. Using this as a description suggested a negative connotation of an abrupt act of excitement or agitation of the individual.

Chapter 95 Investigation

He had a different feeling compared to when he was guiding Lilia in her sword arts. Anthony and Jack practiced hand-to-hand combat and staff arts respectively.

However, even though the martial arts style they practiced was different, having reached the current level of sword arts, Fang Xingjian had a deep understanding of the control of strength.

Although he was not strong in the martial arts that involved hand-to-hand combat or the staff, he could easily point out flaws in their physical movements. And after they shared the incantations of their respective martial techniques with him, he could also correct their physical movements.

After all, regardless of whether it was a sword, a staff, or hand-to-hand combat, they simply varied in terms of physical exertions.

"Jack, your arm position is wrong. When you punch, all the energy in your body must be twisted into a line. Not only your muscles and bones, but your blood flow as well..."

"Anthony, the staff and sword have similar areas. The energy used when you perform your staff arts is extremely strong and bends easily. Therefore, you must control the exertion of strength, and not channel all of it, in order to improve your martial art.

"The two of you must remember, the moves are stiff, but humans are flexible. Each body is different, so after grasping the moves, one must make minute adjustments to match the body's condition.

Fang Xingjian sat on the lawn, and after completing his daily Nurturing and Training techniques' training, he continued to cultivate his newly acquired Nurturing techniques in his mind, also taking time to guide Lilia, Jack, and Anthony in their martial arts.

With the guidance he provided, not only did Jack and the others

feel that they had learnt a lot, Fang Xingjian also felt a special sensation.

Usually, when he practiced the sword, rather than contemplating, he would be able to perform his martial arts as he wished just by relying on his senses alone. No matter what sword technique it was, he could pick it up just by seeing it only once or twice, and could experience swift progress even if he did not put much effort into it. Now, he no longer placed emphasis on the basic principles and rhythms of the sword techniques, since it was sufficient for him to simply practice while relying on his sword senses.

But now, when he guided Lilia, Jack, and Anthony, he could obviously no longer rely on his senses. It was because the three of them did not have Fang Xingjian's talent, and because when Fang Xingjian guided the three of them, he had to specifically tell them the knacks and cruxes out loud.

Fang Xingjian could sense that as he guided the three of them, he was also coming to a conclusion and making slight modifications for his own sword arts.

The few sword techniques that he had just acquired also progressed rapidly, the more experience he gained. And because teaching was just like a revision of his own techniques, while he provided guidance, even the techniques which had been abandoned after he had trained them to level 10, since the effects overlapped with the ones he had learnt before, he continued to gain experience points in all of them.

Booming sounds unceasingly rang through the air. Jack clenched his fists into punches, performing a glorious and powerful technique which combined strength with flexibility. Each punch brought along strong winds that blew in all directions, creating crackling explosive sounds. Most importantly, his blood gushed through his body, creating splashing sounds similar to big streams and rivers.

On the other hand, Anthony waved about the staff in his hands, and made a series of explosions with each swing as well, with resounding crackling sounds. His blood and internal organs all trembled, echoing like the sound of tsunamis.

Lilia waved the greatsword about while Fang Xingjian stood next to her. As she practiced her sword techniques, he would, at almost the same time, form a sword with his fingers, landing on her body with each point and channeling strong energy into her body, changing her blood's flow and breathing rhythm.

At the rate that they were going, Lilia had to constantly control the movement of every single muscle and every single bone. After just a few minutes, she was completely covered in sweat and she was starting to see stars.

But if she made a little blunder, Fang Xingjian's fingers would land on the flawed point, and as a red flush brushed across her face, she would also immediately correct her movements.

With regards to the application of various parts of the body in martial techniques, Lilia was obviously not comparable to Jack and Anthony. Jack and Anthony would only need pointers for a few crucial points, while Lilia needed direct step-by-step help.

However, such training was very effective. Lilia was half-forced to memorize all the applications of energy in the sword technique, and through repetitive practice she remembered it with her body as it became muscle memory.

An hour later, Lilia stopped, completely drenched in sweat. Her clothes were almost entirely wet, and the muscles all over her body trembled unceasingly, as if they were out of control.

Lilia threw a glance towards Jack and Anthony in envy and asked in great anticipation, "Teacher, when will I be like them?"

"It'll depend on how serious you are." Fang Xingjian said casually.

Jack and Anthony also stopped, looking gratefully at Fang

Xingjian. Jack quickly spoke out, "Xingjian, thank you so much! Following your guidance, the progress of our cultivation has become twice as fast as before!"

"It's nothing." Fang Xingjian turned his head and looked in the direction of the main gate.

A beautiful young married lady holding the hand of a little girl was standing at the door. The little girl was very pretty, as if she was carved from white jade. She hid behind the married young lady, looking timidly at Fang Xingjian.

"Haha, you guys are here!" Jack laughed out loud and walked over, picking up the little girl. The girl chuckled and called out for her daddy while the married young lady smiled and stood there.

At the side, Anthony pouted and said, "I'd never have thought that a crude man like Jack would be able to find himself such a beautiful wife."

Fang Xingjian calmly asked, "Family members can also visit the academy?"

Anthony nodded, "They can come visit every week."

Saying that, Jack walked over while carrying his daughter. The little girl looked to be about five to six years of age. Her golden hair was tied up into two little braids, and she was looking shyly at Fang Xingjian and the others.

"Come have a look! This is my daughter Alice." Jack smiled, saying, "How is she? Isn't she cute?"

Hearing that, the little girl wrapped her arms tightly around Jack's neck, turning her embarrassed face away.

Lilia laughed out loud and walked over, reaching out a hand to pinch Alice on her cheek. "Haha, so cute! Let me pinch you!"

But how would Jack dare to let this girl with monstrous strength pinch his daughter? He dodged to the side and said, "Darn, are you

trying to kill my daughter?"

"Aiya, just a pinch, just let me pinch her once." Lilia chased behind them and the two of them started running about.

At that moment, Fang Xingjian suddenly turned to look in the direction of the main gate.

Not noticing when he had arrived, the Headmaster was already there.

"Headmaster!"

The three of them shouted out in unison, "Then we shan't disturb you from your training, let's go."

After giving the three of them guidance in their martial art training that morning, the afternoon was time for Fang Xingjian to practice his Killing technique – Supreme Mistwind Sword.

They left, leaving Headmaster Jackson and Fang Xingjian on the lawn.

Headmaster Jackson said, "Your Master is really impatient, carrying a pile of materials and bone remains, and has gone off to search for an old friend to help you forge a Divine Weapon."

Saying that, he smiled, continuing, "But this time around, the one he found for you is truly an amazing master. You can well anticipate the prowess of this Superior Remains Divine Weapon."

"This is thanks to Headmaster's and Master's nurturing."

"Our nurture is secondary, the crucial thing is still your talent." Saying this, the Headmaster let out a sigh. "Supersonic speed..." Jackson took a long look at Fang Xingjian, "To tell you the truth, you've astonished us all. The news will spread very quickly, and I honestly don't know if it's a good or a bad thing for you."

The Headmaster shook his head, "Forget it, let's not talk about this anymore. With your master gone, from now on I'll take on the role of conducting combat training with you." Saying this, he

smiled again, "You need to be careful, I'm not as easy to deal with as he is."

Before he finished his words, the Headmaster had already attacked, launching a punch which seemed to shock even space and time. Amidst the thunderous sounds, Fang Xingjian felt as if he had knocked against a wall, and with a loud boom he was sent flying a distance of over twenty meters, leaving two long marks on the ground.

But the moment he stopped, strong gales started blowing. Fang Xingjian consecutively flashed about, swiftly forming up to a hundred of afterimages around the Headmaster.

It was a pity that Jackson's second transition, the Tyrant Fist of the Azure Skies, had too big of an advantage. His Reduced Force Field covered an area of more than a hundred meters, and with just a glare, he had shattered more than half of Fang Xingjian's afterimages. He then casually started throwing punches, each punch making an explosive sound, just like a FIM-92 Stinger [1], increasingly reducing the space in which Fang Xingjian could move in.

Compared to Huang Lin's sword arts, Jackson's fists were even more domineering, even more overbearing, even more aggressive. To top it all off, almost all of his five main attributes overwhelmingly suppressed Fang Xingjian's, and Fang Xingjian was almost scurrying off like a frightened rat.

At that same time, a series of claps rang out outside the villa.

"This is really pretty. A new Windstorm Sword Hero. When I was your age, I was not as fast as you are now."

Fang Xingjian and the Headmaster concurrently stopped in their tracks and looked in the direction of the gate.

A man dressed completely in black, with a black top, black pants, and a black mantle was slowly clapping. Standing behind him was

a younger man dressed in a similar outfit.

At their sudden appearance, the Headmaster's pupils instantly contracted. The man who was clapping continued saying, "Hello, I am a Class One Investigator from the Royal Knight Association, Charlie.

"The reason I'm here today is because I'm in charge of the investigation regarding Fang Xingjian."

[1] A type of surface-to-air missile

Chapter 96 Discussion

"Investigation?"

Headmaster Jackson stood in front of Fang Xingjian, looking at the two investigators, and said, "I remember that what I reported to the association was that the First Prince assaulted our official Knight, right?"

"My coming here is not related with the issue with the First Prince." The man dressed in black pulled down his black mantle, revealing an extremely pale-looking face with deeply sunken eyes.

The Knight Association's investigators were an existence which made any Empire's Knight's countenance change at the mere mention of them. As ordinary officials had no power over Knights, only these investigators had the right to investigate, interrogate or even attack them.

But because their numbers were limited and because they were given great powers, each time they conducted an investigation, it was a major operation. Each Knight who was brought back from being investigated were generally left half dead. This had given them an even more terrifying reputation amongst the Knights.

"I've received a tip-off that Fang Xingjian is suspected of colluding with enemies and committing acts of betrayal and treason to our country." The Class One Investigator Charlie smiled and said, "Based on our investigation, we've discovered that he has a questionable background. There are no official records on him at all until one year ago.

"So..." Charlie shrugged, "Aren't we here to conduct an investigation?"

"Charlie, you're Great Western Region's new batch of Conferred Knights, right?" the Headmaster said. The Great Western Region was the region Kirst was located in. The Empire was divided into

eight regions, and ten participants were selected from each of the regions to take part in the Regional Selection.

Conferred Knights were those who had passed the Regional Selection, having completed the second transition. They were extremely strong Warriors who had broken through certain limits, just like the Headmaster, Huang Lin, and the First Prince.

The strong Warriors who were at this stage were extremely tyrannical, and far above the level of ordinary Knights. There were great differences even between their abilities and those of Conferred Knights, and at a level where the gaps between abilities were the widest.

The Headmaster's tone was ice-cold. "You've just become a Conferred Knight, and even had the opportunity to enter the association. You've neither kin nor relatives in the Imperial Capital and would like to look for a backer. I understand this. But are you sure you want to dash head-on like this, to be the first? Are you sure that your backer can keep you safe?"

Charlier squinted his eyes and said, "Oh? I really don't understand what you're saying, senior. In any case, we feel that Fang Xingjian is suspicious and we want to investigate him now. Are you thinking of using force to go against the Royal Knight Association?"

Fang Xingjian was about to step up, but was held back by Jackson. Jackson whispered at his ear, "Don't be rash. No matter whether you're in the right or wrong, once you resort to force, you're going against the whole association. Trust me, at least in the academy, they won't dare to do as they wish.

"Bear with it for a while. I'll look for some old friends and solve this issue very soon."

Fang Xingjian did not reply, but took a long look at Charlie.

Charlie smiled and said, "Done with the talking? Then I'll have to

trouble you to come along with me. Based on the investigation procedure, I've found an office in the academy. We'll start from there."

Fang Xingjian gave a cold snort and followed behind Charlie. The Headmaster furrowed his brows, saying "George (the First Prince), is this your revenge?"

At the same time, the air next to Fang Xingjian's ears trembled slightly. It was the Headmaster using the Reduced Force Field to make tremors in the air, for voice transmission.

"Bear with it for a while. Remember, don't say anything. Don't admit to anything."

The three of them walked into a tiny office with a table and three chairs. It had only a single small window, the size of a palm. It was a standard small black room.

Outside the black room, there were over ten members of staff Charlie had brought along with him. Out of them, only three were Knights, while the others were in charge of helping out with investigations in the association. Although they were not that strong, their skills in interrogating and investigating were all top notch.

"Take a seat," Charlie said, smiling, "We have plenty of time to chat."

Fang Xingjian threw an indifferent glance at him, and took his seat. The other two investigators sat opposite him.

Charlie smiled as he looked at Fang Xingjian. The assistant next to him took out pen and paper, ready to take notes.

"Alright, let's start off with sharing who you really are. Where do you come from? Which country? What nationality are you?"

Fang Xingjian only closed his eyes, sitting still and cultivating his sword arts.

However, his attitude was obviously pissing off the two investigators before him. Charlie's brows twitched as he said, "Haha, I'd advise you to be more cooperative. If not, a chat's not going to be the only thing we're going to have."

Fang Xingjian kept a poker face as he continued to ignore them.

Charlie's countenance turned grim. Usually, given his status as a Conferred Knight and a Class One Investigator, Knights would be trembling in fear before him by now. Even other Conferred Knights had to be courteous before this junior of theirs. When had he ever been treated with such rudeness by a fellow who had become a Knight not too long ago?

Although Fang Xingjian was a genius, a sixteen year old Windstorm Sword Hero, as a Conferred Knight, Charlie had the confidence to defeat him with just one hand. They belonged to two entirely different levels.

His face turned serious as he asked, "Fang Xingjian, you had better answer our questions honestly. We will not let an evil-doer go, but we would never blame an innocent person either."

"However, if you continue to not cooperate with us, then we cannot help you."

"The Knight Association represents all the Knights in the Empire. Even Divine level Warriors have the obligation to cooperate with us. Let alone a small first transitioned Knight like yourself. Don't think that just because you've transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero you'll be able to do whatever you wished. Regulations, rankings and authority are highly regarded in the Empire."

"We would rather lose ten geniuses with the potential to reach the Divine level than to risk having one more Divine level enemy."

"Do you understand?"

Fang Xingjian opened his eyes. Just as Charlie thought that he was about to give in, Fang Xingjian spat out coldly, "No comment."

Charlie smiled coldly and said, "Fang Xingjian, you might not know some of the rights that we hold yet. To be honest, if we wish to, we can take a first transitioned Knight into custody for interrogation for fifteen days, unconditionally."

He then continued, "For example, take today's investigation. We can go on for fifteen days, until the inter-class competition has concluded." He threatened, "Similarly, these fifteen days could be at any time. For example, during next year's Regional Selection?"

In that instant, killing intent brimmed in Fang Xingjian's eyes. The two investigators only felt a flash of electricity appear in the office, as if countless longswords had been drawn out of their sheaths.

However, why would Charlie think much of the killing intent coming from a first transitioned Knight? He smiled and said, "Why? Have you recalled something now? If you continue refusing to cooperate like this, I can promise you that even though the Empire is enormous, there will be no place for you here."

"Why? Does that line sound a bit familiar?"

Instantly, the First Prince's words flashed across in his mind at the speed of lightning.

"But if you were to reject it, I can promise you that even though the Empire is enormous, there will be no place for you here."

The words said by the two of them were exactly the same, not a single word had been changed. At that moment, Fang Xingjian looked at Charlie's complacent smile, knowing for sure that he had been sent by the First Prince to deal with him, or to threaten him.

This was telling him that, he, the First Prince, could make him unable to participate in the Regional Selection for his whole life, without even having to deal with him personally or use any powers.

But Fang Xingjian merely gave a cold smile, then closed his eyes

and continued to cultivate. In the next one hour or more, no matter what Charlie said, he no longer took any notice.

Chapter 97 Mounting a Tiger

Two hours passed, yet Fang Xingjian had still not said a single thing. Not only that, he had not even moved, and if it had not been for the rising rhythm of his chest indicating that he was breathing, Charlie would have probably thought that he was dead.

Finally, Charlie lost his patience. Signalling to his assistant with his eyes, the air around him started to circulate as he spread out his Reduced Force Field.

The assistant stepped forth, moving behind Fang Xingjian.

And just as his arms were about to close in on Fang Xingjian's throat, Fang Xingjian's eyes snapped open.

"Were you sent here by the First Prince?"

"I understand that you guys wish to ingratiate yourself with the First Prince, but do you really feel that the whole Empire already belongs to him? He hasn't ascended the throne yet, and not only that, this place is the KIRST Royal Academy and not the Imperial Capital. I can understand that you guys wish to perform well and obtain good results in front of your master, but in this struggle of power among the top echelons, why are you guys so excited to be cannon fodder?"

Fang Xingjian stared into Charlie's eyes as he spoke, in a composed tone. "Don't do something that your entire family would live to regret."

Charlie's eyes narrowed, "Are you threatening me?"

"I'm just giving you a friendly reminder," Fang Xingjian replied. "You guys feel that the First Prince has full advantage over me, but what if the people behind me decide to take revenge against you? Would you be able to fend them off?"

"You don't have to worry about this. You're better off worrying for yourself instead. Do you think that after transitioning into a

Windstorm Sword Hero everyone would have inhibitions when dealing with you? The Empire has never been short of one or two geniuses.” Charlie coldly laughed, and said, “Do it.”

But even though he had given the command, the assistant behind Fang Xingjian remained motionless. Charlie glanced at him furiously, asking, “What are you doing?”

“Sir...” The assistant laughed bitterly. He was not a Conferred Knight like Charlie. He was merely a first transition Knight, and a Class Two Investigator.

And he knew that Fang Xingjian was right. Regardless of how this matter ended, the rage of those important characters was certainly not something that small fries like himself would be able to take.

Hurting a Windstorm Sword Hero? How could he possibly do such a thing?

Not only that, looking at Charlie who was in front of him, that assistant could not help but sneer in his heart, ‘Damn it, you’re afraid of offending the other party, and so you asked me to make a move because you won’t dare to do it yourself? You think I’m out of my mind?’

Charlie glanced at him coldly, then exhaled slowly, saying, “Very well, Fang Xingjian. You wish to test my patience, right? Then let’s have a good chat from now.”

After which he said to his assistant, “Go and take a break.” Charlie glanced back to Fang Xingjian and coldly stated, “I have a total of eighteen people here. We’ll take turns to have ‘a good chat with you’.”

From then on, Charlie broke off all forms of communication Fang Xingjian had with the outside world, only giving him a cup of water and a porridge meal before unceasingly bombarding him with threats, pressure, and fatigue for over twenty-four hours.

Do not look down on these little methods. One must recall that Knights were only humans, after all. Although they were incomparably powerful, they also needed to eat and replenish their nourishment, as well as to rest in order to replenish their stamina.

Any living thing, if put through spending a long period of time without nourishment, would weaken, in particular the muscles, the internal organs, and the bone structure.

It was the same for Knights. If they only ate porridge and vegetables for a few days, or for over ten days in a row, their muscles would weaken, and their attributes and specialties would degrade as well.

And mental fatigue would make people less resolute, and more easy to force into a confession.

However, Fang Xingjian continued to cultivate as he circulated the Ice Age Meditation Technique in his mind. From beginning to end, he showed no reaction to Charlie's offense. Moreover, he had eaten countless ferocious beasts and had taken countless specially prepared medicinal food so far, so the the nutrients, vital energy and blood in his body were all incomparably profound. The current situation would not affect him much if it was only for a couple of days, but if it dragged on for over ten days, no one could tell what would happen.

By then, his vital energy and blood would definitely weaken, and his body could even become atrophied.

Outside the small black room, Charlie stood there, frowning. A heavily bearded assistant walked out and closed the door, shaking his head at Charlie and saying, "It's no use. Nothing we do has any effect. It's as though he's sleeping."

Charlie stomped into the room, glaring at Fang Xingjian, saying, "Fang Xingjian, are you sure you still want to be so obstinate? We have already investigated the place where you first appeared. That old man has already confessed everything. You came here by sea,

right? You're not a citizen of our Empire."

At this moment, Fang Xingjian actually opened his eyes. Staring at Charlie, he coldly asked, "What do you want to say?"

At this moment, his heartbeat surged. His identity as an Earthling was an absolute secret in the Miracle World. He could not begin to imagine what these people would do after they knew the truth.

Seeing the slight fluctuations in Fang Xingjian's countenance, Charlie continued, "Your teacher Huang Lin already confessed as well. He was the one who conspired with you and doctored the submitted reports about you. Since he has already confessed, what more do you have to say?"

Hearing Charlie's words, Fang Xingjian's mind regained his earlier calm. It was because he had never conspired with Huang Lin, and this was also the first time he had heard that Huang Lin had doctored the reports about him.

This was obviously a trick. Huang Lin had not been caught, so where could the confession have come from?

Seeing from Fang Xingjian's lack of reaction once again, Charlie snorted coldly. The reason he had come here upon receiving the news was because there had been reliable information. Fang Xingjian was someone without an identity, despite them having undergone a meticulous investigation.

According to the Empire's laws, people with unknown origins would never be able to become Knights. After all, Knights were the Empire's great weapons, who received the dedicated nurture of the Empire. There had to be checks at least three generations back for someone who wished to become a Knight, let alone for someone with unknown origins.

As for those with unknown origins, this matter could either be big or small. It was not as if there had not been any prior examples.

With Fang Xingjian's talent, the Empire's upper echelons might have chosen to close on eye, unless Fang Xingjian had done something disadvantageous to the Empire.

Hence, Charlie wanted to quickly interrogate Fang Xingjian to see if he could discover anything. Even if he could not, this resonated with the First Prince's desire, namely to make things difficult for Fang Xingjian.

At that moment, a knock came from the door behind Charlie. An assistant swept a bizarre glance at Fang Xingjian before replying, "Sir, there's something that you have to know."

Charlie furrowed his brows, "Haven't I said it before? Don't disturb me during an interrogation."

The assistant could only smile bitterly as he replied, "It's something very important."

Charlie glared at him, but still he walked out. Before closing the door, he stared at Fang Xingjian and waving his finger at him, saying, "Fang Xingjian, you had better think about this properly. There's no benefit in continuing to refuse cooperating."

After exiting the room, moving past several corridors, and finally into another room, Charlie impatiently questioned, "What is it?"

"Sir, we've missed a piece of information," the assistant bitterly smiled, saying, "The day before we arrived, was the day when Class 256, Fang Xingjian's class, had just participated in the inter-class competition."

Charlie paid no heed to that. "I know that. Yes, they've taken part in the inter-class competition. It's just a bunch of young Knights competing with each other. What problem is there?"

"But... During the competition, Fang Xingjian displayed supersonic movements and sword techniques."

After the assistant finished his sentence, only silence was left between them. After a long while Charlie blinked, in a bit of a

daze, asking, “What did you say? He’s only sixteen, but he has reached supersonic speed?”

The assistant bitterly smiled as he continued, “I heard that the instructors in the academy have already reported this up to the Great Western Region’s Governor.”

The Governor, the one who had authority over all the academies, the Knights’ promotions and over the Regional Selection in a region. It was clear how significant his status was. He could be considered the lord of a region.

But of course, the most important point was still that Fang Xingjian, being only sixteen, had already transcended the speed of sound. How astonishing was this? The future of such a character would definitely be unlimited, and one could not even dare to guess how many influential characters would look upon him with favor.

Instantly, Charlie had a feeling akin to having just stabbed into a beehive.

Do not look down on the achievement of having reached supersonic speed. This was just like a border. If Fang Xingjian had only transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, then many people would just sit still and watch as the First Prince took his action. As long as Charlie did not go overboard, no one would say anything.

However, a Windstorm Sword Hero who had achieved supersonic speed in slightly over a month’s time was a different thing altogether. It was sufficient for many influential characters to only wish to lay their hands on him.

Charlie saw clearly that he needed to grasp the limits with great care.

Charlie was utterly frustrated as he spoke, “Damn, why didn’t you guys tell me this earlier?” If he had known that Fang Xingjian had reached supersonic speed at the age of sixteen, even if the First

Prince had spoken, he would not have dared to come and create trouble for him.

The assistant smiled bitterly yet again and continued, “We’ve only just learnt of this as well. It just so happened that this occurred just one day before we arrived.” But he was thinking to himself with contempt, ‘You, bootlicker... In order to please the First Prince, you’ve offered to come forward. Now that you’ve stabbed into a beehive, you’re blaming us?’

Charlie grabbed his hair, instantaneously entering a state of contradiction.

If he were to continue with the investigation, it would mean that offending Fang Xingjian and the ones backing him up was a done deal. Especially considering the fact that Fang Xingjian had not only transitioned into a Windstorm Sword Hero, but had also attained supersonic speed at the age of sixteen... The value of such a genius was truly extraordinary.

However, if he chose to abandon the investigation and return crestfallen to the Imperial Capital, what would become of the association’s reputation? What would become of his stand in the association in the future?

Charlie suddenly found himself in a situation akin to mounting a tiger, and finding it incredibly difficult to get down.

Swiftly, however, a hint of ruthlessness flickered in his eyes as he said, “I shall pretend that I don’t know of this, and then make good use of this time to interrogate others... This Fang Xingjian has monstrous talent, and has improved at an astonishing speed, but his origins are still unclear. I refuse to believe there’s nothing wrong with him.”

At the same time, another thought surfaced in his heart. ‘Even if nothing comes out of the interrogation, as long as I can accomplish the First Prince’s mission...’

Chapter 98 Investigating One By One

In a small office, Jack sat behind a table, fidgeting about uncomfortably.

Charlie glanced at the assistant beside him, then with eyes akin to that of a hawk, stared at Jack and asked, "With regards to Fang Xingjian, we've already heard.

"What you did amounts to assistance in treason, and is punishable by death, but taking into consideration the fact that your background is clean and that you're still a young Knight, we've decided to give you a chance to confess."

"What? Treason?" Jack said anxiously, "Xingjian committed the crime of treason? How is this possible? But... but he is not to blame for this. This, this is really not his fault. It's... it's my own idea."

A chance?

They looked at each other, and Charlie's gaze revealed a glimpse of excitement.

"Whether he is to blame, what the final sentence will be... that's our problem." He spoke with a ice-cold expression, "What you need to do now is to confess everything."

Jack revealed a troubled expression, "I wished to let my daughter recognize Xingjian as her adopted father, and to let him be my daughter's teacher to introduce her into martial arts. But I had never thought to let Xingjian teach her the academy's sword techniques. I know that it's a crime of treason. How would I dare to harbor such thoughts?"

Charlie frowned. While it was not the clue that he was thinking of, secretly imparting the academy's martial techniques was also a serious breach of confidential information.

Therefore, he continued to ask, "When did Fang Xingjian start to teach your daughter martial arts? What has he taught? Oh right,

where is your daughter now?"

"He hasn't." Jack replied, "He really hasn't. I've only just thought of it, and you guys have already discovered it. Right, how did you guys find out about this? I haven't even told my wife about this."

Charlie exchanged a glance with his assistant, and then look at Jack and coldly said, "Are you trying to be funny?"

With a slap, his Reduced Force Field brushed against Jack's chest, pushing him onto the ground, and caused him to spew out a big mouthful of blood.

He was still having hesitations about Fang Xingjian, but how would it be possible for him to think much of an ordinary Knight like Jack? In the association, he had dealt with countless such Knights.

...

Anthony sat comfortably on the chair, his face wearing a peaceful and calm expression.

Charlie had yet to ask before Anthony took the initiative and said, "You guys want to investigate Fang Xingjian, right?"

"I'll talk, I'll talk about everything.

"Fang Xingjian is headstrong and self-opinionated, with no regard for the bigger picture, doing whatever he wishes with no care for order nor regulation. This kind of person should have long been removed from the ranks of a Knight. I raise both my hands in agreement to your investigation."

Charlie furrowed his brows, what was that about being headstrong and self-opinionated, what was that about no order or no regulation? Even if these were all true, it was nothing more than a fart. He reminded, "Say the main point."

"Yes, yes, yes." Anthony put on a solemn face but randomly said, "He has a serious disposition towards violence and has been

beating up classmates for a long while now."

"Especially Jack and myself. We need to receive a beating from him daily. He would curse as he bashes us up. You can ask the others. Which one of us in Class 256 has not been bashed up by him before? How could we let such a hot-tempered fellow continue to be a Knight?"

Charlie said impatiently, "We know all of this. Do you have any other information?" He untiringly tried to lead him on, "We need information that other people are unaware of. Don't worry, if you're able to provide us with any useful leads, the association will not treat you shabbily."

"Mmm." Anthony nodded, and started to speak out even more, unrestrained, "I feel that this Fang Xingjian, could possibly like guys."

Charlie's and the assistant's face both twitched. Anthony continued to say, "When he was giving guidance for our sword arts, he liked to touch our body all over. Don't you think that's weird? There were a few times when I felt a bit embarrassed from his actions."

Charlie smiled angrily and said, "This is your information?"

"That's right." Anthony also smiled, "A Knight who likes guys, isn't he an embarrassment to the Empire? I strongly support for Fang Xingjian to be expelled."

"Very good, you are very good. Who do you thinking you are talking to? The Royal Knight Association supervises all the Knights in the world. Do you think that we are an existence that you can provoke?" Charlie coldly nodded. With a palm, the Reduced Force Field slapped against Anthony's face, causing it to turn red.

Looking at Anthony, blood trickling down the corner of his lips, Charlie said, "I'll have another good chat with you at the end."

With that, he said to the assistant beside him, "Bring in the next

person."

...

With a slap, Lilia shattered the table, shouting loudly, "My father is a second transitioned level 24 Knight! Kirst's City Lord! A viscount! My grandfather is the Royal Knight Association's Honorary Representative!"

Charlie wiped off the sweat from his forehead. Even if it was him, he was also not willing to rashly offend those Conferred Knights with the rank of nobility, who had actual authority, and countless backers.

He put up a forced smile, saying, "Lady Lilia, don't be nervous. We're only inviting you to cooperate with our investigation..."

"Cooperate your head!" Lilia bellowed angrily, "Release my teacher immediately! Do you know how much of my sword practice time is wasted on this nonsense of yours? You're holding up a future Knight, do you know that?"

The muscles and bones throughout Lilia's body rang out, her bellow was like a thunderous explosion, spreading through the whole building.

"Lady Lilia, you can be assured, we're just conducting a routine investigation. If there's no problem with Fang Xingjian, then we will naturally release him." Charlie suppressed his fury and smiled to his assistant, saying, "It seems like Lady Lilia doesn't know anything. You can bring her back first."

Long after Lilia left, Charlie stood in the meeting room, staring at the ten plus assistants present, saying, "Are you all idiots? Who brought this lady here?"

An assistant raised his hand weakly, saying, "Sir, you were the one who had said to bring everyone who was closely related to Fang Xingjian."

"Why don't you look at how it went? Was I interrogating her? Or

was she the one interrogating me?"

"Such a countryside," Charlie stomped on the chair behind him, shattering it into dust, "How do they expect us to do our work here?"

"And you guys, I know you are not interested in stirring up trouble or offending other people. Each of you just want to get by in life and wait for death to come, for there to be peace in the world.

"Do you guys still have any shame? Do you carry the Empire's responsibility and the association's glory in your heart?"

He threw a glance towards the assistants who were wearing different expressions and thinking of different things, lamenting in his heart, 'A bunch of good-for-nothings who know little but eating and drinking, not knowing how to repay the grace of those who made them who they are today.'

...

On the other side, once Lilia reached home, she immediately ran to her father's study.

Kirst's City Lord was seated at his office desk, drinking a cup of milk tea when he heard a loud bang. The door was sent flying, and it smashed against the wall, as Lilia dashed in infuriated.

"Father, my teacher has been locked up! Quickly get him out of there!"

He smiled bitterly, shaking his head, "Lili, your temper is really..."

"Quickly get them to release teacher! I've gone through so much to find myself such a good teacher, and have been able to improve at a tremendous pace every day. Do you want to see our clan losing a Knight?"

Lilia charged in, grabbed his arm and kept shaking it. Kirst's City

Lord almost could not take it anymore. He held on Lilia's shoulders and said, "Alright, Lili. Your teacher is fine."

"How is he fine? He's been locked up till now!"

"Hehe, a sixteen year old first transitioned Warrior who has exceeded the speed of sound." Kirst's City Lord smiled, "Now, the ones who should be panicking isn't your teacher, but those investigators."

"Fang Xingjian's news came too sudden. This bunch of people must have either taken action before they managed to accumulate all the information, or they must be a bunch of complete hotheads."

Kirst's City Lord smiled calmly and said, "But regardless which it is, it's going to be hard for them to back off now."

"They're still too young. To be in such a hurry to step forth, they are really not mature enough."

Chapter 99 Judgement

Seeing how at ease Kirst's City Lord was, Lilia angrily said, "Then, are you not going to do anything? How much longer do we have to wait?!"

"Not very long," Kirst's City Lord said, "Fang Xingjian is no ordinary person. With his talent, no matter where he goes, he will have friends and enemies as a matter of course, even without doing anything.

"Because there will be those who admire his talent and hope to be his friend, and there will be those who are fearful of his talent and hope to exterminate him before he progresses."

Kirst's City Lord was very clear about the value of a genius like Fang Xingjian. A genius like him, so long as he was given great nurture, would become the Empire's future pillar, a leading militant in the current generation.

And because so, he understood that even if he did not take action, there would be many people stepping forth to save Fang Xingjian.

Moreover, he understood very well who was behind Headmaster Jackson and Huang Lin.

'Hehe, I wonder... After so many years, what level has the one who was so gloriously radiant back then reached now?'

Just as Kirst's City Lord was thinking to himself, Lilia who was at the side smashed his office desk into pieces with a bang.

"Are you going to help or not?!"

"Sigh, Lili, this is made from top quality ancient wood." Kirst's City Lord shook his head. However, he had doted on this youngest daughter the most. Moreover, she had the inborn speciality, 'Monstrous Strength'. Her strength was constantly at its peak, so she would often make damage. He was used to all this.

Looking at Lilia's puffed up face, he helplessly said, "Alright, alright, alright. I'll write a letter right away and send it up to the higher authorities."

...

In a residence in Kirst City, a middle-aged man with a rectangular face, brown-colored hair, and a short skinny build was listening to the reports of the situation in the academy from his subordinate, seated.

The man with a rectangular face seemed to be short and skinny, but even when he was seated, he still gave off an imposing aura, a feeling like the majesty of a great mountain.

When he had heard from his subordinate that the Investigator Charlie had started to interrogate Jack, Anthony, Lilia and the others, a cold light gleamed in his eyes as he mumbled, "These people are truly retrogressing. I personally complimented this Charlie when he passed the Regional Selection, but now, he isn't showing any political sensitivity at all.

"Are matters concerning the royalty something that a small-fry investigator like him can meddle in?"

The one who had spoken was the the Governor, Devitt, a person at the Empire's pinnacle, and a second transition level 29 Conferred Knight.

Furthermore, compared to him, Huang Lin was only a second transition level 25 Conferred Knight.

Do not underestimate a four level gap. At the second transitional phase, each additional level would require one to go through hurdles of hardship; each additional level would be accompanied with a tremendous improvement in powers.

And in fact, there were a total of eight Governors across the Empire's eight regions, each of them in charge of all the Knights of a region. Each of them were all Warriors at the pinnacle of the

second transition and the supporting pillars of the Empire as well.

Seated next to Governor Devitt was Huang Lin, who had gone on a search for a master who could forge the Superior Remains Divine Weapon.

Hearing Devitt's words, Huang Lin furrowed his brows and said, "I'd never have thought that the First Prince would be so anxious."

"Of course he is anxious. While the Empire seems very calm now, the whole Imperial Capital is filled with an undercurrent of hostility. He urgently requires new powers and resources, but it's a pity that he is too anxious." Devitt sighed and said, "Being overly unyielding makes one fragile. The First Prince has always been arrogant and domineering. If this goes on, it can not spell good for the Empire."

"That is what important characters like yourself need to consider." Huang Lin asked, "I only want to know when you'll be able to get my disciple out."

Devitt smiled and said, "Don't be anxious. Your disciple will definitely be safe. It's still early. I want to see if there's any other clowns who will be jumping out."

"Your knife is already polished." Huang Lin said.

Devitt shook his head, "You guys look at the problem too biasedly. I see every Knight as a person with great potential, as the Empire's wealth. However, it's impossible for there to be no conflicts between people forever. As long as competitions are kept within a certain limits, I will not kill.

"But... I won't tolerate idiots rising to ranks and undertaking important positions, not even if they are extremely strong.

"People who are not even able to see through Fang Xingjian's value, I will not get rid of them. But obviously, they are more cut out for battle and are not of leadership material. If such people are given leadership roles, they would only cause havoc in the Empire.

"Therefore, I'll pick them all out, and send them to be on the frontline or assign them duties as instructors."

After saying that, Devitt's face broke into an unfathomable smile, "Your disciple will come out safe and sound from the association's investigation and wait for me to forge the Superior Remains Divine Weapon for him.

"By then, there would probably be no one in Kirst who would be able to hold him down.

"But this time around, the association's interrogation will be able to keep his temper in check."

Huang Lin flatly said, "He isn't one who would cause trouble."

"We'll see," Governor Devitt said, "It's undisputable that he is a talent, but most talents are only skilled in combat and are the top-notch combat prowess of the Empire.

"Therefore, if he is also qualified to take up important positions, it will be even better."

The Great Western Region's Governor Devitt was not only a top-notch Warrior amongst the Conferred Knights, he was also a great master in forging Divine Weapons. This time around, the person Huang Lin was looking for to help forge Fang Xingjian's Divine Weapon was this top-notch character from the Great Western Region.

In the end, Devitt once again smiled coldly and said, "Moreover, I've just written a letter to the Imperial Capital. After all, it's still better for the matters of the association to be solved internally."

...

Many days passed by. Charlie sent people to take turns interrogating Fang Xingjian, regardless of whether it was day or night. Each day, he only gave Fang Xingjian two cups of water and two bowls of porridge, hoping that by continuously exerting pressure, the latter would give in.

Most of the time, no matter how firm an ordinary Knight's determination was, one that had been cut off from connections with the outside world for such an extended period of time and constantly depleted of his physical strength and mental energy would gradually give up on resisting in the end, or even start to suspect that their allies outside had given up on them.

But Fang Xingjian was totally fine. He continued to cultivate his sword arts daily, bringing his Nurturing techniques to the maximum level one by one. His blurred speciality was turning increasingly clear, and he could now see the first part, 'Un'.

He seemed to be very calm and reserved, doing what he usually did without the slightest care for what was happening around him. Charlie and the others had no concrete evidence, and judging from how they had been acting throughout this time, he was very certain that Charlie and the others could not do anything to him.

Compared to Fang Xingjian's calm, Charlie was anxious like ants on a hot pan.

An assistant reported, "Kirst's City Lord has reported to the Regional Chief that we have falsely accused an official Knight, persecuted Kirst's civilians, and caused all of Kirst's aristocrats to be extremely jittery."

If the Governor was said to be the number one person in the whole region, in charge of governing all the Knights in a region, then the Regional Chief was the Regional Office's person in authority. He was in charge of overseeing the civilians and was the number two character in the whole region. However, the Regional Chief would only slightly lose out to the Governor in comparison.

Hearing Kirst's City Lord's actions, Charlie cursed in his heart as his assistant continued, "Headmaster Jackson had also reported to the Governor saying that we are freely framing and torturing students, destroying the tranquility in Kirst Royal Academy and affecting the order of their education system."

"Those two old, ignorant fools." Fury flashed past Charlie's face. The other party's report sounded simple, but it basically meant that they were waving a blade towards him at point-blank, determined go against him to the end. However, he had failed to find out anything yet. If this were to go on, he would be labelled as an incompetent fool who was unable to see the bigger picture.

This would mean that, implicitly, there would no longer be a spot for him in the association, and even his future political path would turn extremely grim.

Before he coming here, he had only known that this fellow was a rare Windstorm Sword Hero, but one that was a commoner with no powers backing him up. On the other hand, he himself was supported by the First Prince!

Who would have thought that only after coming did he then discover that this was a great trouble.

Thinking of this, a tinge of viciousness appeared on Charlie's face, "Immediately bring Fang Xingjian for questioning. This time around, I'll take action myself."

"Take action?"

Charlie said coldly, "It's the last day. It'll be fine if we can make him spew it out. If not, we'll end it." After saying that, he shut his eyes, feeling a bit tired.

'The respective powers in the Empire are overly protective. It's too hard for the association to do our work.'

Chapter 100 The Last Gamble

The association's work was truly not easy. Especially when they came across troublesome characters like Fang Xingjian, Charlie better sensed all the obstacles coming at them from all directions.

Putting aside the fact that the academy and the local officials were not cooperating, even his subordinates were getting increasingly useless.

Charlie suddenly headed to the office Fang Xingjian was in. He sat down, staring at Fang Xingjian.

'There's definitely a problem with this Fang Xingjian.'

'Unknown identity, exceptional talent. He's obviously come from an unusual background.'

'Someone from another country? An occult believer? Orphan from a fallen faction? Or is he a demon from another dimension?'

All these days, the more he investigated, the more Charlie felt that Fang Xingjian was definitely hiding secrets.

A person without any records other than in the past year, and Charlie was unable to find out where he was from. He had suddenly soared after appearing, accomplishing what countless others could not. What were the chances of being no problems with someone like him?

For such a person to enter the Empire, and even become a Knight... How could Charlie possibly feel that it was safe?

Charlie's judgement was not wrong, but he was looking in the wrong direction.

It was because he had thought all along that Fang Xingjian might be someone from an opposing country. He could have been the descendent of a faction which had been wiped out, or a descendent from some fallen aristocrat clan. In short, he must be the

descendent of someone from an opposing force of the Empire. If not, how could it be that his identity was not revealed?

He would never have thought that Fang Xingjian was simply not someone from this world.

Therefore, no matter how much he investigated, as long as Fang Xingjian did not say anything, he would have no leads at all.

Seeing Fang Xingjian still keep his eyes tightly shut and not saying a word, a cold gleam flashed past Charlie's eyes.

Fang Xingjian had been unceasingly cultivating his sword arts and Waves. Even if his body was not replenished with various nutrients, heavenly and earthly treasures, and even though he was going through a deficit of vital energy and blood, he continued to cultivate.

Without the replenishment of ferocious beasts, various medicinal foods, and heavenly and earthly treasures, Fang Xingjian continued to cultivate even though his body was unable to take it anymore. Of course, it was harming his body, causing his muscles, flesh, and blood vessels to work under extreme fatigue, unable to rest properly.

Therefore, while his sword arts were improving and his attributes were being tempered, his vital energy and blood were being depleted, his muscles and bones were increasingly strained, and even the thinnest channels in his body were getting destroyed, unable to recover.

Even if such cultivation brought damage to his physical body, he did not give up.

It was because he already had very little time left. He could not afford to waste the slightest bit of it.

It would take losing his consciousness to get him to stop,, or going through a further extended period of malnutrition that could cause him irreversible damage if he were to continue cultivating.

Charlie, of course, did not know that Fang Xingjian could still continue with his cultivation despite being interrogated like this daily, when he could not even fill his stomach. Moreover, he was cultivating at great speed. Having gone through endless sword arts cultivation day and night for the past few days, he had almost brought all of his Nurturing techniques to the maximum level, and that blurred speciality was getting increasingly clearer as well.

Now, Fang Xingjian could already clearly see the first word, 'Unparalleled'.

"Fang Xingjian? Are you still unwilling to speak up?" Charlie asked, calmly. "So many days have passed. You should also understand that there's no one who can save you."

He put up a calm front and said, "In fact, I do quite admire you. Within such a short one year, you've been able to find so many people to help you.

"You've seen the result yourself. They've really be jumping around a lot for the past few days, but it's useless. The Royal Knight Association supervises all the Knights in the Empire. If you go on like this, sooner or later, your status as a Knight will be removed.

"Not only that, you will also be maimed of your martial techniques and Waves.

"If you want to be saved, there's only one way out.

"Which is to confess. Tell your secret and plead for the association's understanding."

Fang Xingjian smiled, "Confess my secret, become a prisoner, then wait for the First Prince to save me, and sign on the Devil's Note?" Today Charlie had come in alone, and Fang Xingjian knew what he was planning. Having unceasingly applied pressure and interrogation for the past few days, going to such an extent to overwhelm him, was it not just for this?

"Charlie, remember what you've done the past few days. You'll regret it."

With that, he looked at the other party as if he were looking at a dead man. Killing intent soared within him, pushing towards the other party, then all of a sudden he shut his eyes, not saying another word as he fully focused on cultivating his sword arts.

"Regret? We'll see who will be the one to regret it."

Charlie coldly said, "The First Prince is wise and great, unparalleled in both civil and military skills. It's only a matter of time before he attains the Divine level, and he becomes the King of the Empire.

Even if you escape this time, what about next time? What's next? What will happen after the First Prince ascends the throne to become the King? Will you be able to run for your whole life?

"As long as you refuse to budge, then no matter how big the world is, there'll be no place for you.

"Now, with me alone, you've lost all your standing and reputation. How many people are there under the First Prince? How many of them are stronger than me, have a higher status than me, have a even more terrifying identity than me?"

Fang Xingjian continued to keep his eyes closed, unceasingly cultivating his sword techniques in his mind. His sword arts seemed to have reached a crucial point, so he directed all his attention to them.

From then on, no matter how much Charlie threatened and baited him, Fang Xingjian did not react at all. More and more of his sword techniques had reached the maximum level, and his cultivation had entered a never before encountered state of focus. It was as if, in his mind, the whole world had started to change.

Charlie did not know about this at all, and only thought that Fang Xingjian was still putting up a fight. Therefore, he rolled up

his sleeves, slowly starting to move behind Fang Xingjian and exerting pressure on him. It was Charlie's Reduced Force Field.

"You're better off not retaliating. I have 107 points in strength. Even if it's only the Reduced Force Field, it's not something you'll be able to face."

Seeing that Fang Xingjian was still not reacting or making a sound Charlie let out a cold laugh, and gradually started pressing down on Fang Xingjian's shoulders.

Fang Xingjian ignored him, or rather, he had already lost all his senses relating to the outside world. His mind continued cultivating his sword arts. There was just one more Nurturing technique to be brought to the maximum level, and the blurred specialty was getting increasingly clearer as well. The next word 'Sword' had already appeared.

An entirely new feeling forced Fang Xingjian to continue to search for it, fully immersing him in cultivation.

Charlie's wrist was like cast iron, gradually increasing the strength applied on Fang Xingjian's shoulders.

His face revealed a brutal expression. "We have a lot of time, you can think about it slowly."

If not for the news that Fang Xingjian had transcended the speed of sound was too astonishing, he would have applied certain means on Fang Xingjian. But now, he was also left with no choice. No matter if it was a success or failure, it was his last interrogation.

And although Fang Xingjian had broken through the sound barrier, it only proved that he had great talent. While breaking through the speed of sound could mean that he could have his way amongst those in the first transition, when facing a Conferred Knight, the gap was very large.

Just as Charlie was gradually grabbing onto Fang Xingjian's shoulder with more and more force, Fang Xingjian's mental sword

practice got increasingly faster, increasingly faster.

Creak creak. His shoulder was suddenly grabbed so hard that it started making creaking sounds, as if it would break at any moment.

The experience for the last set of Nurturing technique soared, and was nearing the maximum level.

Finally, with a huge boom in Fang Xingjian's mind, the last set of the Nurturing technique reached the maximum level. That new speciality finally appeared. Fang Xingjian only felt that ten thousands of swords had appeared, as if something had changed and was just taking shape. All the sword techniques gathered together and then exploded with a boom. At the next moment, he suddenly fainted.

Seeing Fang Xingjian's head slant, Charlie's heart suddenly leapt and he immediately let go of his hand.

"Hey, Fang Xingjian, what's wrong with you?"

Seeing that there was no reply, Charlie furrowed his brows and said, "Don't think that you'll be fine just because you're putting up a fainting act."

He tested the other party's breath and heartbeat. They felt that normal. But no matter how much he pushed or pulled Fang Xingjian, or even splashed water on his face, Fang Xingjian still appeared to be as if he was asleep, without any reaction.

Charlie started to panic. 'Could it be that Fang Xingjian has reached his limits? But he doesn't look so weak.'

He attempted to lay Fang Xingjian on the ground and then took a closer look. He realized that the other party still had no reaction, as if he was really asleep.

'What's going on?'

Just as he was feeling troubled, the door was kicked open with a

bang. Charlie was just about to curse out, he kept his mouth shut when he saw who it was. His paled face turned pale.

Huang Lin was the first to dash in. When he saw Fang Xingjian on the floor, he immediately went up to check out the situation.

Governor Devitt also walked in. Seeing Fang Xingjian unconscious on the floor, his brows furrowed.

Entering with Devitt was an elderly man dressed in black. He wore almost the same clothes as Charlie, but with an additional rim of gold at the sides, making him appear even more dignified.

"Sir, why... Why are you here as well?" Charlie said, stammering.

The old man glared, saying, "Have you forgotten the association's regulations? We always stay neutral, and do not take part in the internal strife within the Empire." He threw a glance towards Fang Xingjian and asked, "What happened? What did you do?"

In that instant, a feeling that great trouble had fallen came to him. Charlie's smile turned extremely bitter, "I really did not do anything. He just fainted by himself."

However, Huang Lin noticed that Fang Xingjian would not wake up no matter what. He looked at Charlie and said, brimming with killing intent, "Devitt, you were the one who had assured me that my disciple will definitely be fine. What now? This matter will not end here."

Devitt also furrowed his brows and said, "Let the doctor take a look first." He looked towards the elderly man and said, "Seems that there's a lot of problems within the association. Some investigator's characteristics are also worrying. I'll definitely be reporting this to his Majesty."

"And if I were to find out that something has happened to Fang Xingjian, hmph hmph..."

Although he did not say anything in the end, cool air seemed to float around the whole place. Frost formed in the corners of the

room.

A second transition level 29 strong Warrior. Even if it was just a slight killing intention, it was sufficient to make anyone tremble in fear.

The old man's face was extremely grim. His gaze towards Charlie was as if he wanted to devour him.

Charlie's countenance turned extremely bad. He opened his mouth and said in a bitter voice, "I really haven't done anything yet!"

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